

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHTH  
SEMI-ANNUAL

# CONFERENCE

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

HELD IN THE TABERNACLE  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

**SEPTEMBER 30, - OCTOBER 1, 1978**

WITH REPORT OF DISCOURSES

Published by  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
of the  
ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHTH SEMI-  
ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE  
of  
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

held in the  
Tabernacle on Temple Square  
in  
Salt Lake City, Utah

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# THE ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHTH SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 148th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah on Saturday, September 30, 1978, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, September 30, and October 1, 1978. The General Welfare Session was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, September 30, 1978 at 7:00 A.M. The General Priesthood Meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, September 30, 1978, beginning at 7:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at all sessions of the conference and conducted the Saturday morning, Priesthood and Sunday morning sessions of the conference. President N. Eldon Tanner, first counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Welfare and Saturday afternoon sessions. President Marion G. Romney, second counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Sunday afternoon session.

In the Saturday morning session, President Spencer W. Kimball presented the name of Elder James E. Faust as a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Elder Delbert L. Stapley. President Kimball also presented the names of three new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goasland, Jr.

At the Saturday afternoon session, President Tanner announced the emeritus status of the following members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, William

H. Bennett, John H. Vandenberg and S. Dilworth Young. Also, President N. Eldon Tanner presented the revelation extending the priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church, which was accepted by the conference as "the Word and Will of the Lord."

The proceedings of all sessions of Conference were given extensive coverage in the United States and Canada over many radio and television stations coast to coast, originating with KSL in Salt Lake City.

By means of satellite transmission, sessions of the Conference were heard over radio in Mexico, Central and South America, Australia, Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia. For the first time, portions of the Conference were carried over 50 television stations in Italy. Special transmission of the Saturday and Sunday morning sessions were carried by oceanic cable to members assembled in many chapels in England, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada.

Rebroadcasts of all sessions of the Conference were sent by KSL Radio in Salt Lake City and KIRO Radio, Seattle, Washington, to many parts of the United States and Canada, and the world, beginning at midnight following each Conference day's proceedings.

This report of the Conference also includes the continuity of the Tabernacle Choir and Organ broadcast over the Columbia Broadcasting System on Sunday from 9:30 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. immediately preceding the general conference session.

## General Authorities Present

The following General Authorities

of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:* Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney.

*The Quorum of the Twelve:* Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight and James E. Faust.

*Patriarch to the Church:* Eldred G. Smith.

*The First Quorum of the Seventy:*

*Presidents:* Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, A. Theodore Tuttle, Neal A. Maxwell, Marion D. Hanks, Paul H. Dunn and Wm. Grant Bangertter. *Additional members:* Theodore M. Burton, Bernard P. Brockbank, Robert L. Simpson, O. Leslie Stone,<sup>1</sup> Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin,<sup>2</sup> Loren C. Dunn, Rex D. Pinegar, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Jr., John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E.

Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock,<sup>3</sup> Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goaslind, Jr. *Emeritus members:* Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, William H. Bennett, John H. Vandenberg and S. Dilworth Young.

*The Presiding Bishopric:* Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

### Other Authorities Present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance at the conference included regional representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishoprics of wards, and presidencies and members of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthood quorums.

Many auxiliary officers, general, stake and ward, were also in attendance.

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Elders Robert D. Hales, Hartman Rector, Jr., and F. Enzo Busche were excused inasmuch as they are serving as mission presidents.

## FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

### FIRST SESSION

The opening session of the General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, September 30, 1978, at 10:00 A.M. with President Spencer W. Kimball presiding and conducting.

The music for this session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang, "Praise to the Lord."

President Kimball then made the following remarks:

#### President Spencer W. Kimball

We extend a cordial greeting to all assembled this morning in the Tabernacle on Temple Square at the commencement of this, the first General Session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall and the Salt Palace and the many throughout the world who make up the unseen audience of radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir has just rendered, "Praise to the Lord."

Seated on the stand are all of the General Authorities of the Church ex-

cept Elders Robert D. Hales, Hartman Rector, Jr., and F. Enzo Busche, who are serving as mission presidents.

Elder G. Homer Durham and Bishop J. Richard Clarke are seated in the Assembly Hall and Elders James A. Cullimore and Ronald E. Poelman are seated in the Salt Palace.

Present also are regional representatives, stake and temple presidencies, bishoprics, and other general and local officers of the Church, and members of the Church from many foreign lands. We extend a special welcome to government, education and civic leaders who are present.

Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger will conduct the music for this session. John Longhurst is at the organ. The Tabernacle Choir will now begin this session by singing, "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang, "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell offered the invocation.

Without announcement, the Choir rendered the number, "Behold Thy Servant Lord."

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

The Church has been greatly saddened by the passing of Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He died on August 19, 1978. Elder Stapley served faithfully and ably

in the Twelve for twenty-eight years. His presence will be missed greatly, and we repeat our love and condolence extended to his family at the time of his passing. We present for the vote of the

conference, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to replace Elder Stapley, Elder James Esdras Faust. All of you who are in favor of this proposition, please make it manifest by the show of the right hand.

We also present for the vote of the conference Elders Fred Burton Howard, Teddy Eugene Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., to serve as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and Elder William Grant Bangerter to serve as a president of the First Quorum of the Seventy in place of Brother Faust. Will those who can sustain these Brethren in the positions indicated, please signify it by raising your right hands? Any contrary by the same sign.

We ask these Brethren to take their places on the stand in the seats provided.

### Growth of the Church

How glorious it is, brothers and sisters, to welcome you to this world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to envision the great throngs gathered here in Salt Lake City and elsewhere, making this in very deed an international gathering of the faithful Saints.

I rejoice with you in the progress and expansion of the Lord's earthly kingdom in almost all parts of the free world. We are constantly opening up new areas, and we are continually establishing new missions and dividing others to give more effective leadership to the ever-increasing numbers of our young men and women engaged in full-time missionary service. Since our last conference six months ago, we have added ten new missions, for a total of 166 throughout the world. We now have 26,606 missionaries carrying the gospel to almost every nation, kindred, tongue and people under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whose divine calling it is "to officiate in the name of the Lord, under the direction of the Presidency of the Church, agreeable to the institution of heaven; to

build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations" (D&C 107:33).

Before the end of the year, we will have over 1,000 stakes. This seems incredible when I recall that there were but 145 stakes in the whole world when I became an Apostle in 1943.

This growth is cause for thanksgiving and praise to the Lord for divine direction of this program of saving souls and bringing them into the fold of Christ. While much has been done and accomplished, much more remains to be done. We must go forward in courage and great boldness to proclaim Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord and the Redeemer of mankind.

### Gardens and yards

We have asked everyone wherever possible to assist with a home garden for the production of food so you may enjoy the efforts of your labors and help provide for your needs. We urge parents not only to engage in this activity, but to let their boys and girls share in helping with the garden. They will not only learn the value and joy of work, but it will help them develop a sense of responsibility as they participate in such family projects.

We should make not only our fields and dooryards attractive, but our homes, barns, outbuildings, and fences should be kept in good repair and painted. We realize, too, that such projects are never ending and need continuing attention and planning.

### Journals

We renew our appeal for the keeping of individual journals and records and compiling family histories. Any Latter-day Saint family that has searched genealogical and historical records has fervently wished their ancestors had kept better and more complete records. On the other hand, some families possess some spiritual treasures because ancestors have recorded the



events surrounding their conversion to the gospel and other happenings of interest, including many miraculous blessings and spiritual experiences. People often use the excuse that their lives are uneventful and nobody would be interested in what they have done. But I promise you that if you will keep your journals and records they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren, and others, on through the generations.

Family home evenings are a most appropriate time and place to engage in such activities and especially to train young children in the art of writing about their lives. If you haven't already done so, make up your minds that today you will start your journals.

### Temple Attendance

There is an urgency to engage more fully in the redeeming of our kindred dead through more frequent temple attendance. All those who possess temple recommends should use them as often as possible to engage in baptisms, endowments, and sealings for the dead. Other members of the Church should concern themselves seriously with preparations to qualify for temple recommends that they, too, might enjoy these eternal blessings and also act as saviors on Mount Zion. There is an ever-increasing burden of temple work to be done by the Saints, and we should rise to meet this challenge.

### Sabbath day observance

I again would urge upon all Saints everywhere a more strict observance of the Sabbath day. The Lord's holy day is fast losing its sacred significance throughout the world, at least our world. More and more, man destroys the Sabbath's sacred purposes in pursuit of wealth, pleasure, recreation, and the worship of false and material gods. We continue to urge all Saints and God-fearing people everywhere to observe

the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Businesses will not be open on the Sabbath if they are not patronized on that holy day. The same is true of resorts, sporting events, and recreation areas of all kinds. Pursuit of the almighty dollar is winning, it seems, over the Lord's commandment, "Keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary" (Lev. 19:30).

"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do *not* the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46; emphasis added).

Violating the purpose of the Sabbath is not the only matter in these days which calls forth our cry of protest. We are greatly concerned about the world in which we live. The mass media of communications daily presents us with so much that is evil, that is ugly and sordid, and so much that is destructive of righteousness. Godlessness seems to reign everywhere. Satan is unfettered apparently. We have previously said that the growing permissiveness in modern society gravely concerns us.

### Forces of good and evil

We see about us constant change. Even the pace of life itself has speeded up. Sometimes it seems that the world is undergoing such throes of change that people are disoriented, not knowing what is of value. Right and wrong, however, are as they always were. The principles of the gospel are unaltered. All of men's evil speaking and all of men's evil acting cannot alter one jot or tittle of the commandments of God.

The forces of good are clearly and continually under attack. There are times when it seems the world is almost drowning in a flood of filth and degradation. And I want to cry out, "Hold on! Hold on to what is right and true. Therein is safety. Don't let yourself be swept away."

In 1946 I visited Hawaii shortly after a huge tidal wave, where walls of water some forty feet high struck Hilo and the Hamakua coast, and I saw the devastation that resulted. Homes had been overturned and shredded, crushed

into splinters like toothpicks; fences and gardens were obliterated; bridges and roads were washed away. Bathtubs, refrigerators, mangled autos lay strewn all about the streets. Where one of our little chapels had stood, nothing remained but the foundation. More than a hundred people lost their lives; as many more were injured; thousands were left homeless. I heard many stories while there of suffering, of heroism, of salvation.

One woman told how she received a telephonic message from friends to get out and to leave—that a tidal wave was coming. She looked out to sea and saw the monstrous wave approaching, like a mountain. She and her husband picked up the baby and ran for their lives up the hill. However, two of their little girls were away from home playing near a clump of lauhala trees. They saw the wave coming, ran into the trees, and held tightly with their arms around the tree trunks. The first gigantic wave washed entirely over them, but they held their breath and clung with all their might until the water receded and their heads were again above the water. When the wave receded, they quickly ran up the hill before the succeeding waves came. Together, the family watched from the safety of the hill as their home below disappeared under the pounding of the waves.

We, too, are faced with powerful, destructive forces unleashed by the adversary. Waves of sin, wickedness, immorality, degradation, tyranny, deceitfulness, conspiracy, and dishonesty threaten all of us. They come with great power and speed and will destroy us if we are not watchful.

### **Keep all God's commandments**

But a warning is sounded for us. It behooves us to be alert and to listen and flee from the evil for our eternal lives. Without help we cannot stand against it. We must flee to high ground or cling fast to that which can keep us from being swept away. That to which we

must cling for safety is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our protection from whatever force the evil one can muster. An inspired Book of Mormon prophet counseled his people: "Remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo" (Hel. 5:12).

I would emphasize that the teachings of Christ that we should become perfect were not mere rhetoric. He meant literally that it is the right of mankind to become like the Father and like the Son, having overcome human weaknesses and developed attributes of divinity.

Because many individuals do not fully use the capacity that is in them does nothing to negate the truth that they have the power to become Christ-like. It is the man and woman who use the power who prove its existence; neglect cannot prove its absence.

Working toward perfection is not a one-time decision but a process to be pursued throughout one's lifetime.

Through Moses the word of the Lord came down from the mountain. The commandments which the Lord gave to the children of Israel set minimum standards of conduct. These commandments, said Paul, are "our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24).

But living by the letter of the Ten Commandments is only the beginning of perfection. Jesus taught the sanctity of the Ten Commandments, but emphasized repeatedly that there was more.

It is not enough to acknowledge the Lord as supreme and refrain from worshipping idols; we should love the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength, realizing the great joy he has

in the righteousness of his children.

It is not enough to refrain from profanity or blasphemy. We need to make important in our lives the name of the Lord. While we do not use the Lord's name lightly, we should not leave our friends or our neighbors or our children in any doubt as to where we stand. Let there be no doubt about our being followers of Jesus Christ.

It is not enough to refrain from moviegoing, hunting, fishing, sports, and unnecessary labor on the Sabbath. Constructive use of the Sabbath day includes studying the scriptures, attending church meetings to learn and to worship, writing letters to absent loved ones, comforting the sorrowing, visiting the sick, and, in general, doing what the Lord would have us do on this, his holy day.

If we truly honor our parents as we are commanded to do, we will seek to emulate their best characteristics and to fulfill their highest aspirations for us. Nothing we could give them materially would be more prized than our righteous living.

It is not enough to refrain from killing. We are rather under solemn obligation to respect life and to foster it. Far from taking a life, we must be generous in helping others to enjoy the necessities of life. And when this has been accomplished, we seek to improve the mind and the spirit.

We refrain from taking harmful substances into our body. Through wisdom and moderation in all things, we seek good health and a sense of physical well-being.

It is not enough to refrain from adultery. We need to make the marriage relationship sacred, to sacrifice and work to maintain the warmth and respect which we enjoyed during courtship. God intended marriage to be eternal, sealed by the power of the priesthood, to last beyond the grave. Daily acts of courtesy and kindness, conscientiously and lovingly carried out, are part of what the Lord expects.

It is for us to keep our hearts and

minds pure, as well as our actions.

"Thou shalt not steal," the Lord said on Sinai (Exod. 20:15). Thus it is for us to be honest in every way. We must be generous, the very opposite of selfishness. When money is needed, we give money. But often what is needed more is love and time and caring, which money cannot buy. When that is true, even being generous with our money is not enough.

Bearing false witness and coveting the belongings of others are further evidences of selfishness. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," Jesus taught. On this and on the love of God "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:39-40).

Kindness, helpfulness, love, concern, generosity—we could go on for the list of virtues is endless. The development of these traits is what the Lord asks of us.

"If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Articles of Faith 13).

### **Truthfulness of the Gospel**

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. Any earnest seeker can know for himself that it is true by studying and living its principles and seeking the companionship and help of the Holy Ghost. But how much easier it is to understand and accept if the seeker after the truth can also see the principles of the gospel at work in the lives of others. No greater service can be given to the missionary calling of the Church than to exemplify positive Christian virtues in our lives.

The Lord holds forth a glorious promise to those who love him and demonstrate this love by faithful, devoted service and the living of his eternal principles. When the winds of change blow fiercely and the waves sweep over us, we have a tree or rod of principle to which we can cling for safety. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ which has been restored to the earth in its fulness.

May the Lord bless us, each one, to

hold fast to the iron rod, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Following President Kimball's address, the Choir sang without announcement, "Lead Me Into Life Eternal."

### President Spencer W. Kimball

The Tabernacle Choir has rendered, "Lead Me Into Life Eternal."

We shall now hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Boyd K. Packer

It will be my purpose to give an unqualified endorsement to an organization to which I have never belonged. It has greatly enriched my life and that of my family. I have never been eligible to hold membership; nevertheless, it continues to be an influence with me.

### Origin of Relief Society

It is the Relief Society, one of the oldest women's organizations in the world. There are members in about seventy nations, numbering now well over a million. Each year the membership increases by thousands. Only women are eligible to join.

When the Prophet Joseph Smith established it, he said to the women:

"You will receive instructions through the order of the Priesthood which God has established, through the medium of those appointed to . . . direct the affairs of the Church in this last dispensation; and I now turn the key in your behalf in the name of the Lord, and this Society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time henceforth" (*History of the Church*, 4:607).

The Prophet told them that the organization would be "a charitable Society, and according to your natures," and then he added, "If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates" (*History of the Church*, 4:605).

Thirty years ago, President George Albert Smith said:

"You are . . . more blessed than any

other women in all the world. You were the first women to have the franchise; the first women to have a voice in the work of a church. It was God that gave it to you and it came as a result of revelation to a Prophet of the Lord. Since that time, think what benefits the women of this world have enjoyed. Not only you belonging to the Church have enjoyed the blessing of equality, but when the Prophet Joseph Smith turned the key for the emancipation of woman-kind, it was turned for all the world, and from generation to generation the number of women who can enjoy the blessings of religious liberty and civil liberty has been increasing." (*Relief Society Magazine*, Dec. 1945, p. 717.)

### Family benefits from Relief Society

I would not press to join the Relief Society. I can get more from it if I leave it to be a women's organization. I then benefit more, much more, than I could by holding membership.

I hope the name, the Relief Society, will never be changed. It ties back to the very charter given to women by the Prophet. Its full, balanced program responds to every worthy need that is by nature a part of womanhood.

Each member is constantly exposed to literature, art, music, to current events, to *homemaking skills*, and, I emphasize, to *spiritual living*. She is encouraged to the full expression of every worthy feeling and impulse and talent.

When my wife returns from the grocery store, some things are set out

for immediate use. Other things are set on the shelf until she, for instance, bakes again. Some are to be used only in time of an emergency.

Very frequently there are things that are not for us at all. They are to be given away to someone that she wants to *do for*.

She returns from Relief Society in much the same way, this time bearing spiritual commodities. Some are used right away; others are to be stored. But most of it she got for someone else.

Her store is replenished by attendance at Relief Society, and she still draws, now and again, on the very first Relief Society she ever attended.

I do not benefit, I repeat, from having membership in the Relief Society. We, as a family, benefit through association with women who do.

Many years ago there was published in the Church this statement: "The place of woman in the Church is to walk beside the man, not in front of him nor behind him" (John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, comp. by G. Homer Durham, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960, p. 305).

In an organized way Relief Society symbolizes the relationship between man and woman in the Church.

Relief Society is for virtuous women, for steady women, for organized women. It is for reverent women, for spiritual women, for diligent women, for married women and for the unmarried, for women young and old.

Into its ranks are invited those women who are unsteady or disorganized, the lost, careworn women. The Relief Society is an unmeasured blessing to lonely women.

### Doing for others

Shortly after the funeral held for the first wife of President Harold B. Lee, I was in a group which included his daughter Helen.

Someone expressed sympathy to her for the passing of her mother and said, "She took such good care of your

father. I'm sure he must be lonely and must miss all of the things she did for him."

Helen responded with an insight of remarkable wisdom. "You do not understand," she said. "It is not so much that he misses all of the things that Mother did for him. He misses her most because he needs *somebody to do for*."

We all need *someone to do for*. When that is unfulfilled as a need, we become lonely. In the Lord's own way, Relief Society provides for that need.

Sister, you are needed there. We need women who will applaud decency and quality in everything from the fashion of clothing to crucial social issues.

We need women who are organized and women who can organize. We need women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer; women who can teach, women who can speak out.

There is a great need for women who can receive inspiration to guide them personally in their teaching and in their leadership responsibilities.

We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous.

We need women who can discern those positions that may not be popular at all, but are right.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, in organizing the Relief Society, that there is a need for "decision of character, aside from sympathy" (*History of the Church*, 4:570).

The Relief Society is so vital a link in our welfare services that save it be strong, we must surely fail.

I do not endorse the Relief Society for the sake of the organization, but for what accrues individually to the benefit of those who belong.

### Relief Society attendance

Now to the sisters in the Church I say that attendance at Relief Society, in an important way, is not really optional.

It is as obligatory upon a woman to

draw into her life the virtues that are fostered by the Relief Society as it is an obligation for the men to build into their lives the patterns of character fostered by the priesthood.

Recently I listened to several sisters discuss Relief Society. One young woman said, "We find it so difficult to interest both the older and the younger women. If we have a lesson or project the younger women are interested in, the older women do not come. It's so hard to get something to please everyone."

Sisters, to me there is something pathetic about those of our sisters who sit at home waiting to be *enticed* to Relief Society. That is not right!

When faithful sisters pray and work and make a worthy presentation, they deserve your support. Just to have you attend is a great help.

Some sisters, it appears, seem to pore over the offering of Relief Society like a fussy diner searching a menu for something to excite the taste.

Sisters, it is your duty to attend Relief Society, just as it is the duty of the brethren to attend their priesthood meetings.

I've heard some sisters say, "I don't attend Relief Society because I just don't get anything out of it."

#### **"What are you putting into it?"**

Let me teach you a lesson.

In 1888 the Relief Society and the young women's organizations of the Church became charter members of the National Council of Women and of the International Council. These two organizations were established primarily to promote women's suffrage and to improve the lot of women and children everywhere.

During those years our delegates had their good days and their bad, depending upon circumstances, the leadership, and their attitude toward the Mormons.

In April of 1945 Belle Smith Spafford became the president of the Relief Society. Only a week or two after she

had been sustained a letter came from the National Council of Women, announcing their annual meeting to be held in New York City.

Sister Spafford had attended those meetings before, and in view of her previous experience, she and her counselors carefully considered the invitation for several weeks.

They decided to recommend to the President of the Church that the Relief Society terminate its membership in those councils. They prepared a statement of recommendation, listing all of the reasons for so doing.

Trembling and uncertain, Sister Spafford placed the paper on the desk of President George Albert Smith, saying, "The Relief Society Presidency wishes to recommend that the General Board terminate its membership in the National Council and in the International Council of Women, for the reasons listed on this paper."

President Smith carefully read the paper. Had they not held membership for well over half a century? he inquired.

Sister Spafford explained how costly it was to go to New York, the time it took, and described the humiliation they occasionally experienced. She recommended that they withdraw because "we don't get a thing from these councils."

This wise, old prophet tipped back in his chair and looked at her with a disturbed expression. "You want to withdraw because you don't get anything out of it?" he questioned.

"That is our feeling," she replied.

"Tell me," he said, "what is it that you are putting into it?"

"Sister Spafford," he continued, "you surprise me. Do you always think in terms of what you get? Don't you think also in terms of what you have to give?"

He returned that paper to her and extended his hand. With considerable firmness he said, "You continue your membership in these councils and make your influence felt."

And so they did! Sister Spafford took the gentle correction from that wise prophet, and the day came that she was president of that organization.

Now, I pass that same message to each sister in the Church. If you are absenting yourself from Relief Society because "you don't get anything out of it," tell me, dear sister, what is it that you are putting into it?

### **An inspired organization**

I endorse the Relief Society without hesitation, for I know it to have been organized by inspiration from Almighty God. It has been blessed since its organization. I know that it is a rising, and not a setting, sun. I know that the light and the power that emanates from it will increase, not decrease.

I know that Relief Society today is led by wise and inspired and strong women. Through them the frustrations of the poorly trained, the lonely, the single will give way to security and happiness.

The bewilderment of the uninspired and the misled will be replaced with assurance and direction.

After months of prayerful concern over this matter, having inquired myself of Him whose organization it is, without

reservation, without hesitancy, I endorse and applaud the Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and pray God to bless these, our sisters, to strengthen them, for this is His church and we are led by a prophet. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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Following Elder Packer's remarks, the Choir sang without announcement, "How Long, O Lord, Most Holy."

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### **President Spencer W. Kimball**

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us. He was followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "How Long, O Lord, Most Holy."

The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Hope of Israel," following which Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy will speak to us.

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The Tabernacle Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Hope of Israel."

## **Elder Rex D. Pinegar**

Recently a friend of mine was returning to his home in Salt Lake City on a plane from Dallas, Texas. His mind was focused upon an important event that was soon to occur in his family. His only son would be leaving home in just a few days to serve as a missionary in a far-distant land. His great love for his son caused him to reflect, "If my son is going so far away to teach about our Church, this had better be the best church!" Then he took out a notepad and pen and began to list

the characteristics or qualities one would look for in the best church.

### **Purpose of Church programs**

"There should be a program to build and strengthen youth," he wrote, "an athletic program, a wholesome activity program, a program for teaching and training children, a program for developing the skills and talents of women, a program to provide for the needy, for the ill, for the lonely, for the

victims of catastrophes and disasters, a program to provide opportunities for work and service, a program to assist families and individuals in spiritual development and progress."

His list became long and impressive, and he satisfied himself that his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, offered a program to meet the need of every individual. Truly, he determined, it is the best church his son could represent!

My friend felt so good about his list of attractive qualities of the best church that he decided to show it to the gentleman seated next to him on the plane. The man, an executive from a financial firm, responded with interest and respect. Together they reviewed the list, and as they concluded their conversation the businessman asked my friend, "Would you like to know what I would look for in a church? There is just one criterion: the members of that church would best exemplify the teaching of the Savior—'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

My friend said he learned an important lesson from that experience. He had taught this fine man about the programs of the Church without acknowledging that the purpose of these programs is to help members learn how to love God and their fellowmen. He has shared that experience with me and permitted me to share it with you today that we might all be reminded of this.

### Love our fellowmen

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

"And the second is like [unto it], namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31.)

It is that love for the Lord and for our neighbors—all men everywhere—that is the motivating force which prompts my friend's son, and twenty-

seven thousand like him, to leave home, friends, family, security, and comfort to go among unknown neighbors throughout the world with the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is because we love the Lord and our neighbor that we are willing to go to any length, sacrifice at any price, to share the message that has brought joy and happiness into our own lives. For Latter-day Saints declare that God lives. He loves all men. He will lead all who will repent and follow him to everlasting joy and happiness.

We believe the people of the world are yearning for a message such as this to believe in. A national survey conducted recently by a leading publishing company revealed that the people of the world are in desperate need of a religion that will "regenerate their underlying faith in Christian living, . . . that will help them find the strength within themselves which their forefathers had, . . . a religion that will bring back strong family relationships, . . . and a religion that reflects the pioneering strengths which built this great country." (Unpublished report, Littlepage Limited Advertising, 15 Aug. 1978.) This survey discovered that the basic concepts of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints parallel the religious needs that people are seeking. The New York-based publishing company stated: "In a time of confusion, they (Mormons) give very clear and definite answers. . . . Their growth prospects for the immediate future seem very good . . . in that great world that is awaiting conversion."

### The love of God

My eleven-year-old daughter, Kristen, expressed a concern to me a few days ago that I believe is felt by many who are seeking to find a better, more righteous way of life. She said, "Dad, I've been challenged to live just one day as Jesus would live, but I've tried for a week now and I just can't do it. Every day I think this will be that day. Then I



make a mistake, and I have to wait for another day before I can try again."

I am often asked to counsel with people who experience somewhat that same dilemma. They want to correct and change their lives. They feel, however, that they have made so many mistakes that there is no way to cast off the burdens they now bear because of those sins. They feel weighted down by sorrow and despair, with no hope of escape.

Kristen and all of us should remember that while we are commanded to love God, he has a perfect love for us. All the world needs to be taught of the great redeeming power of the Savior's love. He loves us so much he has promised to forgive us of those things we do that are wrong and remember them no more if we will only repent and come unto him (see D&C 58:42). He loves us so much that he was willing to pay the price for those sins. He suffered for us. He died for us. He said, Come follow me; cast your burdens on the Lord. His desire is to lift us, to help us, to guide us, to save us.

Henry Drummond, in his classic writing on the subject of Christ's love, tells of a man who went to see a dying boy. He put his hand on the boy's head to comfort him and said, "'My boy, God loves you.'" The boy soon arose "from his bed, and called out to the people in the house, 'God loves me! God loves me!' One word! It changed that boy. The sense that God loved him overpowered him, melted him down, and began the creating of a new heart in him. And that is how the love of God melts down the unlovely heart in man, and begets in him the new creature, who is patient and humble and gentle and unselfish. And there is no other way to get it. There is no mystery about it. We love others, we love everybody, we love our enemies, *because He first loved us.*" (*The Greatest Thing in the World*, Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d., pp. 47-48.)

It is this knowledge of his great love for us that influences our actions

toward him and others. He said, "Love one another; as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

### Sharing the gift of love

A few weeks ago someone gave me a gift. As I unwrapped the handsome package and discovered its contents, I was overcome with emotion. It was a precious item. I had seen it before in the office of the one who was now giving it to me. I had openly admired it for its unique capabilities and usefulness. It was finely crafted and very expensive. I was deeply touched as I received this generous gift—not because of its monetary value, but because I recognized the great love that the giving of this gift demonstrated to me. Here was an object I knew my benefactor could not afford to purchase for himself or for me. I knew that someone who loved him had bestowed that gift upon him. He was built up and made happy because of that gesture of love toward him. Now in his desire to bring me happiness, to express his love to me, he was sharing one of the finest material possessions he had.

How grateful I am for this example of Christlike love and for the many other gifts of love which I experience daily in my home and in my associations throughout this great church. These experiences lift me up and give me the desire to extend my love to others.

Now, may we as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints remember and live these first great commandments. May we love the Lord with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and strength, and may we love our neighbors as ourselves. May we show that love by living all the commandments of God and by sharing with our neighbors our greatest gift of love, the gospel of Jesus Christ, which I testify is the truth and the best on the face of the earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken

to us. Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

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## Elder Howard W. Hunter

Not long ago I read a report of an interview with a man of some national importance. In giving his views on a question of present-day concern he made this comment: "I am not a religious man, but there was something about the circumstances of the proposed action that did not strike me as being right." His comment made me wonder why he associated religion with the social and political subject he was talking about, and it also made me wonder why he thought he was not a religious person. The answer to these queries, I suppose, lies in the definition of religion.

### Religion

The word *religion* has no one generally accepted definition. Sometimes it is used in reference to worship, whether it be public or private, and sometimes to distinguish between things sacred and those that are profane or worldly. Belief in the immortality of the soul is a concept that is looked upon by some as religious, and one of the most common uses of the term is the belief in deity or deities—a worship of God. The word *religion* is often associated with the pursuit of what is commonly called salvation, and sometimes with revelation from a divine source.

Not long after the organization of the Church, Joseph Smith published answers to a long list of questions that had been asked of him. One of the questions was this: "What are the fundamental principles of your religion?" To that question, Joseph Smith replied: "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and

Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it." (*History of the Church*, 3:30.)

### Spiritual references

On many subjects we are often able to find definitions in the scriptures, but it is interesting to note that even though we think of the Bible as a religious treatise, the word *religion* does not appear in the Old Testament, and in the writings of the New Testament it is used on three occasions only. I would like to make reference to these three.

The first use of the word *religion* is by Paul as he presented his defense before King Agrippa. He said to Agrippa: "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26:5). He was referring to the three sects of the Jews: the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. He said he lived a Pharisee—the sect of the three that was the strictest in religious practices. Paul was not talking about a religious creed or a belief, but rather the form of worship, because the Jews placed great stress on practice rather than doctrine—on ritualistic worship rather than a creed of belief.

The second use of the word *religion* was also by Paul, in writing to the Galatians. He made this statement: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church" (Gal. 1:13). We well know of the persecutions inflicted by Paul upon those who followed Christ and professed to be Christians and wonder why he

did these things. What caused him to take such a ruthless course? Paul answers these questions by stating that he had practiced the religion of his fathers—a religion of iron rules, laws, and traditions inherited from his Hebrew lineage. These iron rules of practice are what caused him to relentlessly persecute the followers of Christ. Thus, in writing to the Galatians he referred to religion in the same manner as he did before King Agrippa, as rules of practice rather than doctrine or a creed of belief.

Now we come to the third instance in the New Testament of the use of the word *religion*. It is in the Epistle of James, written "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1), probably meaning to all Israel, in which he said: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26). James seems to be using the term *religion* in the manner used by Paul, as being ritualistic or ceremonial—that if a man is ritualistic in this manner, yet fails to be guarded in what he says, his rituals are in vain.

### True religion

James then very pointedly defines what he refers to as pure religion, as distinguished from forms of ritualistic worship and iron rules of practice as described by Paul. James said: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The wording is simple and unpretentious, yet the meaning is profound and has deep significance. The words "visit the fatherless and widows" are a reminder that we should have compassion for our neighbor—our fellowmen. This is the teaching of the Master in his frequent reference to love. The Lord said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:39). This is what James was expressing—a love

for, and devotion to, God, by compassionate service to fellowmen. He used as examples the fatherless and the widows.

The second element of the definition of religion stated by James is to keep "unspotted from the world." To be unspotted from the world simply means being unworldly and free from the pollution of sin and unrighteousness. Paul said something about this also in his writing to the Romans: "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).

In short, James tells us that true religion is a devotion to God, demonstrated by love and compassion for fellowmen, coupled with unworldliness. Such a statement seems too simple to be sufficient, but in its simplicity it speaks an important truth. Restated it may be said that true religion consists not only in refraining from evil (that is, remaining unspotted), but in deliberately and purposefully doing acts of kindness and service to others.

King Benjamin recognized this principle as he spoke to his people from the tower. He reminded them that he had spent his days in their service and said: "I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:16-17.)

Matthew puts it this way: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

### Joseph Smith

The life of the Prophet Joseph Smith portrays these same attributes—service to friends, to his fellowmen, to all mankind, and to his God. It was during the last two hours of his life, confined behind bars in Carthage, that his close friend, President John Taylor, sang a song to cheer him on that melancholy occasion. The song has a number of verses commencing with helping the

unfortunate and sharing a crust with one perishing for want of bread. These are some of the words:

*A poor wayfaring man of grief  
Had often crossed me on my way,  
Who sued so humbly for relief  
That I could never answer, Nay.*

*I had not power to ask his name;  
Whither he went or whence he came;  
Yet there was something in his eye  
That won my love, I knew not why.*

*Once, when my scanty meal was spread,  
He entered—not a word he spake.  
Just perishing for want of bread;  
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake.*

*And ate, but gave me part again;  
Mine was an angel's portion then,  
For while I fed with eager haste,  
The crust was manna to my taste.*

The verses continue to tell of a drink given to quench the thirst of a sufferer, clothing and rest for the naked and weary, caring for the injured and wounded, sharing the condemnation of a prisoner. Then the last verses recognize the appearance of the Master:

*Then in a moment to my view,  
The stranger started from disguise:  
The tokens in his hands I knew,  
The Savior stood before mine eyes.*

*He spake—and my poor name he named—  
“Of me thou hast not been ashamed;  
These deeds shall thy memorial be;  
Fear not thou didst them unto me.”  
(History of the Church, 6:614-15.)*

Poor, indeed, and destitute is the man who disclaims being religious because he does not have sufficient love for his fellowmen to be concerned and have compassion. The Lord will say: “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matt. 25:45-46.)

### Admonition to be truly religious

President Joseph F. Smith, a former president of the Church, wrote these words many years ago: “Do not say that you are not naturally religious, and so make that an excuse for evil deeds and forbidden acts. . . . Be rather religious both in appearance and in reality, remembering what true religion means. Even as the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, so is the possession of the knowledge that you love purity, righteousness, honesty, justice and well-doing, an indisputable evidence that you are naturally religious.”

President Smith continued: “Search your hearts, and you will find deep down that you possess this knowledge. Then encourage its growth and development, to the gaining of your own salvation.” (“Not Naturally Religious,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1906, p. 495.)

I pray we may serve our fellowmen and remain unspotted from worldly influences, so that we may be worthy to be considered truly religious and receive the approbation of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Without announcement, the Choir sang, “Choristers of Light,” and “Praise to the Man” following Elder Howard W. Hunter’s talk.

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Tabernacle Choir has sung, “Choristers of Light” and “Praise to the Man.”

We welcome those who have just joined us on television or radio for this, the first session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us.

## President Marion G. Romney

My beloved brothers and sisters, I invite you to join with me in a prayer that we may enjoy the Spirit of the Lord while I attempt to say a few things about the worth of a soul.

### The worth of souls

As I left Church headquarters for a mission fifty-eight years ago this fall, I was given a sheet of instructions on which was printed this modern scripture:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him" (D&C 18:10-11).

The impact of this statement that Christ suffered "the pain of all men," here given by the Lord to emphasize his high appraisal of the worth of human souls, is sharpened by the realization of the intensity of that suffering. Of it, Luke wrote, speaking of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane:

"And he . . . kneeled down, and prayed,

"Saying Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:41-44.)

Eighteen hundred years later, Jesus himself, speaking of that suffering, said, speaking to one of the early brethren:

"I command you to repent . . . lest . . . your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:15-19.)

### Words of ancient prophets

This high value which the Lord puts upon the souls of men as made known in these modern scriptures, he also revealed to his ancient prophets. To impress upon their minds the worth of a human soul, he gave some of them a glimpse of the magnitude of his creations and then explained that they were but ancillary to the accomplishment of his purpose—"to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

After Enoch had visioned some of God's creations, he declared that "were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations" (Moses 7:30).

Following a similar showing to Moses, the Lord said: "Worlds without number have I created . . .

"And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:33, 38-39.)

These scriptures bring to mind and give meaning to the Psalmist's searching inquiry:

"When I consider thy heavens," he said, "the work of thy fingers, the moon

and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . .

"For thou hast . . . crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:3-6.)

### Revealed by God

Now the answer to this profound question—What is man that he should be of such inestimable worth?—comes only by direct revelation from heaven. So important is it that it is communicated to men by God himself and angels sent by him. It was thus revealed in the very beginning to Adam and Eve. In each succeeding gospel dispensation, it has been likewise revealed to "chosen vessels of the Lord" (Moro. 7:31)—that is, to his prophets.

These prophets have faithfully borne testimony of the truth revealed to them. This they have done that the residue of men, those who will qualify themselves to obtain it, by the power of the Holy Ghost may come to a knowledge of it. (See Moro. 7:32.)

In this manner we ourselves have learned *who* and *what* man is. For such a knowledge we give the Lord grateful thanks and adoration. Thus knowing the truth, we bear the following witness:

Man is a dual being—a living soul—composed of a body of spirit and a physical body. His spirit existed as an individual personal entity in a pre-mortal life long before the earth was created. As a matter of fact, this earth was expressly created as a place for the spirits of men to take on mortality.

The clearest teaching on record as to the nature of the spirit of man was given 2200 years B.C., when Jesus, in his spirit body, appeared to the brother of Jared and said:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . .

"Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all

men were created in the beginning after mine own image.

"Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh." (Ether 3:14-16.)

From this it is clear that man's physical body is patterned after his spiritual body.

### The origin of man

In origin, man is a son of God. The spirits of men "are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:24). Through that birth process, self-existing intelligence was organized into individual spirit beings.

### The destiny of man

The spirits of men, by their conduct in pre-earth life, earned a two-point destiny: (1) the privilege to be tabernacled in a body of flesh and bone; and (2) immortality as living souls.

The plan to bring about this two-point destiny provides for (1) mortal birth, through which man's spirit receives a body of flesh and bone, thus becoming a soul; (2) mortal death, by which man's spirit and body are temporarily separated—his soul dissolved; (3) redemption of the soul by resurrection—in which the spirit and body are inseparably reunited.

In this way the Lord brings to pass that immortality of which he spoke to Moses when he said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Through his victory over death, Christ has already secured the immortality here spoken of.

But this is not all. He accomplished more for men.

By his atonement Jesus brought men within the reach of eternal life. However, he did not guarantee eternal life to all men as he did guarantee immortality.

There will be many gradations among immortal souls. As "one star differeth from another star in glory so also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41-42). That's Paul's doctrine.

*Immortality* connotes life without end.

*Eternal life*, on the other hand, connotes quality of life—exaltation, the highest type of immortality, the kind of life enjoyed by God himself.

### Man's potentiality

It is in the attainment of eternal life, which man must earn in mortality, that he reaches his full potentiality. Man, being a child of God—who himself is a glorified, resurrected, immortal soul, enjoying eternal life—has, in harmony with the universal law of nature, the potentiality to reach, in full maturity, the high status of his Heavenly Father.

John was alluding to this truth when he wrote, "We [are] the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

To obtain this high estate Jesus enjoined men when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father . . . in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Eternal life is to be obtained only through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. "Enter ye in at the strait gate," said Jesus, "for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it" (3 Ne. 27:33).

### Gate to eternal life

Although in this and other scripture Jesus warned and taught that the gate to eternal life is strait and the way narrow, he nevertheless made it clear that both the gate and the way are open for every man who will qualify himself to enter. Here are his words:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who

forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am. . . .

"I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

"For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father." (D&C 93:1, 19-20.)

The crowning work and glory of God is, therefore, as he has said, to bring to pass the eternal life of man.

Such is the worth of a soul. Surely it "is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). They should be of like value in the sight of men. As God's work and glory is to bring to pass the eternal life of man, so the desire, hope, and work of every man should be to obtain eternal life for himself. And not for himself only but also for his fellowmen; and it will be when he fully appreciates who and what he is—his nature, origin, destiny, and potentiality.

In comparison to eternal life, all else sinks into insignificance. For, as Jesus said:

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37.)

### Truths revealed anew

Now, in conclusion, I direct a short message to you, our listening friends—you who may not have yet received the restored gospel of Jesus Christ:

The truths concerning the worth of human souls we have here briefly sketched are not new. As already indicated, they were revealed to Adam in the beginning. He taught them to his children. They have been revealed anew and taught in each succeeding gospel dispensation. In the meridian of time

Jesus taught them here on earth in person.

Our special message to you today is that in this, our day, known in the scriptures as the dispensation of the fulness of times, the heavens have been reopened; the truths concerning man's nature, origin, destiny, and potentiality have been again revealed for our special benefit. The Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and ancient apostles and prophets have visited and communicated with "chosen vessels of the Lord"—modern prophets—and have restored and reaffirmed these truths and all the rest of the pure and simple principles, ordinances, and teachings of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ.

The priesthood of God—the authority to administer the ordinances of the gospel—has been committed again unto men. Christ has reestablished his church in the earth. It is here with full power to do for us, you and me, all that needs to be done in mortality, which we ourselves cannot do to bring to pass our eternal life.

### Invitation to investigate

We love you; we recognize you as our brothers and sisters in the family of God, our Heavenly Father. We thank you for listening to us. We invite you to investigate our message. We know that if you will do so honestly and prayerfully, asking "God, the Eternal Father, in the name of [Jesus] Christ, . . . with a sincere heart, . . . he will manifest the truth of [these things] unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moro. 10:4).

We are anxious to inform you of the message of the Restoration. At your request or invitation we will send or bring you literature or come and teach you at your convenience. To this service we are dedicated; to it we have been divinely called, for we bear the same responsibility as did Christ's ancient disciples, for unto us also the Lord Jesus has said, "Go ye into all the world,

preach the gospel to every creature" (D&C 68:8).

I give you my personal witness to the truth of these things. If you can understand and accept them, they will give you an appreciation of the worth of souls found in no other source; they will put you in the way of eternal life; they will transform your lives and bring you a peace hitherto unknown. That it may be so I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Following President Marion G. Romney's address, the Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor," without announcement.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

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President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just given the concluding address, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor."

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this Conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

We shall conclude this session of the Conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing, "O Thou Rock of Our Salvation." Following the singing, the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is Supervisor of the Japan-Korea Area.

This Conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The Choir sang, "O Thou Rock of Our Salvation."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi pronounced the benediction.



## FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

### SECOND SESSION

The second session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, September 30, 1978.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session. Conducting was President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

Music for this session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus with Brother Robert Bowden conducting and Brother Roy Darley at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting President Tanner made the following remarks:

#### President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this and all other sessions of the Conference, has asked me to conduct this session.

We welcome all assembled in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second session, of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio and television. We note that there are overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall, where Elders Sterling W. Sill and Robert L. Backman preside; and in the Salt Palace, where Elders Joseph Anderson and Rex C. Reeve, Sr. preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge special guests present this afternoon—government and educational leaders, as well as regional representatives, stake and temple presidencies, patriarchs, bishops, and officers and members of the General Boards and committees.

The proceedings of this Conference will be carried extensively in the United States and Canada over many television

and radio stations, originating with KSL in Salt Lake City.

Through satellite transmission or by way of international short-wave radio, sessions of this conference will be heard over radio in countries of Central and South America, Mexico, Australia, Europe, and Africa; and for the first time, over 50 television stations in Italy.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the radio and television stations for their cooperation in making such an extensive coverage of this Conference possible.

The General Priesthood Meeting to be held this evening will be transmitted over closed-circuit from the Salt Lake Tabernacle to men of the Priesthood assembled in approximately 1469 buildings throughout the United States and Canada, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Australia, The Philippines, Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong, and by way of closed-circuit television to the Assembly Hall, Salt Palace, and to stake buildings in Salt Lake City and on the Brigham Young University Campus.

The music this afternoon will be provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Brother Robert Bowden with Brother Roy Darley at the organ.

The Choir will begin this service by singing: "I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Paul H. Dunn, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The Mormon Youth Chorus sang the hymn, "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go."

Elder Paul H. Dunn offered the invocation.

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**President Tanner**

The Chorus will now sing, "O Lord God."

The anthem, "O Lord God," was rendered by the Chorus.

**President N. Eldon Tanner****Acceptance of revelation**

In early June of this year, the First Presidency announced that a revelation had been received by President Spencer W. Kimball extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members of the Church. President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

President Kimball has asked that I now read this letter:

"June 8, 1978

"To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world:  
"Dear Brethren:

"As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever-increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

"Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of

these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

"He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination to either the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

"We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

"Sincerely yours,

"Spencer W. Kimball

"N. Eldon Tanner

"Marion G. Romney

"The First Presidency"

Recognizing Spencer W. Kimball as a prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is proposed that we as a constituent assembly accept this revelation as the word and will of the Lord. All in favor please signify by raising your right hand. Any opposed by the same sign.

President Kimball, it appears that the vote has been unanimous in the affirmative, and the motion has carried.

Before I present the General Authorities and officers to the conference for vote, President Kimball has asked me to make the following statement:

### **Emeritus members**

The very rapid growth of the Church across the world, with the attendant increase in travel and responsibility, has made it necessary to consider a change in the status for some of the Brethren of the General Authorities. Some of our associates have served for many years with complete and unselfish dedication, and they deserve every honor and recognition for such devoted service. It is felt advisable at this time to reduce somewhat the load of responsibility that they carry.

After a long period of prayerful consideration and counsel, extending, indeed, over several years, we announce a new and specific status to be given from time to time to Brethren of our associates in the General Authorities. We announce that some Brethren have been designated as emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy. These Brethren are not being released but will be excused from active service. It is out of consideration for the personal well-being of the individuals, and with deep appreciation for their devoted service, that this designation will be given from time to time to designated members of the General Authorities.

### **General Authorities and Officers sustained**

I will now present the General Authorities, general officers, and general auxiliary officers of the Church for the sustaining vote of the conference.

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as prophet, seer, and revelator, and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please make it manifest. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

Nathan Eldon Tanner as first counselor in the First Presidency and Marion

G. Romney as second counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify. Those opposed by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, LeGrand Richards, Howard W. Hunter, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, and James E. Faust. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

As Patriarch to the Church, Elder Eldred G. Smith. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary by the same sign.

The counselors in the First Presidency, the Twelve Apostles, and the Patriarch to the Church as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary by the same sign.

Spencer W. Kimball as trustee-in-trust for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Opposed by the same sign.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, A. Theodore Tuttle, Neal A. Maxwell, Marion D. Hanks, Paul H. Dunn, and W. Grant Bangerter. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary by the same sign.

As additional members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Theodore M. Burton, Bernard P. Brockbank, Robert L. Simpson, O. Leslie Stone, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Rex D. Pinegar, Gene R. Cook, Charles A. Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Jr., John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, Robert E. Wells, G. Homer Durham, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzio Busche, Yoshihiko

Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goaslind, Jr. As emeritus members of the First Quorum of the Seventy: Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, William H. Bennett, John H. Vandenberg, and S. Dilworth Young. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if any, by the same sign.

As the Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop; H. Burke Peterson, first counselor; and J. Richard Clarke, second counselor. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As Regional Representatives: All Regional Representatives as they are at present constituted.

The Relief Society: Barbara Bradshaw Smith, president; Janath Russell Cannon, first counselor; and Marian Richards Boyer, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Sunday School: Russell M. Nelson, president; Joe J. Christensen, first counselor; William D. Oswald, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Men: Neil D. Schaerer, president; Graham W. Doxey, first counselor; and Quinn G. McKay, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Young Women: Elaine A. Cannon, president; Arlene B. Darger, first counselor; and Norma B. Smith, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

The Primary Association: Naomi Maxfield Shumway, president; Colleen Bushman Lemmon, first counselor; and Dortha Lou Christiansen Murdock, second counselor; with all members of the board as at present constituted.

All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

The Church Board of Education: Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Neal A. Maxwell, Marion D. Hanks, Victor L. Brown, and Barbara B. Smith. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary by the same sign.

The Church Finance Committee: Wilford G. Edling, Harold H. Bennett, Weston E. Hamilton, David M. Kennedy, and Warren E. Pugh.

The Tabernacle Choir: Oakley S. Evans, president; Jerold D. Ottley, conductor; Donald H. Ripplinger, associate conductor; Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, and John Longhurst, Tabernacle organists.

All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

It seems, President Kimball, that the voting has been unanimous in favor of these officers and General Authorities.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker and he will be followed by Elder James E. Faust whom you have just sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve.

## Elder Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, I pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit in this very serious responsibility.

### Miracle of children

We took some of our grand-

children to the circus the other evening. I was more interested in watching them and many others of their kind than in watching the man on the flying trapeze. I looked at them in wonder as they alternately laughed and stared wide-eyed at the exciting things before them. And

I thought of the miracle of children who become the world's constant renewal of life and purpose. Observing them in the intensity of their interest, even in this atmosphere, my mind reverted to that beautiful and touching scene recorded in the book of Third Nephi when the resurrected Lord took little children in his arms and wept as he blessed them and said to the people, "Behold your little ones" (17:23).

It is so obvious that the great good and the terrible evil in the world today are the sweet and the bitter fruits of the rearing of yesterday's children. As we train a new generation, so will the world be in a few years. If you are worried about the future, then look to the upbringing of your children. Wisely did the writer of Proverbs declare, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

When I was a boy, we lived in the summer on a fruit farm. We grew great quantities of peaches—carloads of them. Our father took us to tree pruning demonstrations put on by the Agricultural College. Each Saturday during January and February we would go out to the farm and prune the trees. We learned that by clipping and sawing in the right places, even when snow was on the ground and the wood appeared dead, we could shape a tree so that the sun would touch the fruit which was to come with spring and summer. We learned that in February we could pretty well determine the kind of fruit we would pick in September.

E. T. Sullivan once wrote these interesting words: "When God wants a great work done in the world or a great wrong righted, he goes about it in a very unusual way. He doesn't stir up his earthquakes or send forth his thunderbolts. Instead, he has a helpless baby born, perhaps in a simple home out of some obscure mother. And then God puts the idea into the mother's heart, and she puts it into the baby's mind. And then God waits. The greatest forces in the world are not the earthquakes

and the thunderbolts. The greatest forces in the world are babies." (*The Treasure Chest*, p. 53.)

### Rearing children

And those babies, I should like to add, will become forces for good or ill, depending in large measure on how they are reared. The Lord, without equivocation, has declared, "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40).

If I may be pardoned for suggesting the obvious, I do so only because the obvious is not observed in so many instances. The obvious includes four imperatives with reference to children: Love them, Teach them, Respect them, Pray with them and for them.

There is a bumper sticker seen much of late that asks the question, "Have you hugged your child today?" How fortunate, how blessed is the child who feels the affection of his parents. That warmth, that love will bear sweet fruit in the years that follow. In large measure the harshness that characterizes so much of our society is an outgrowth of harshness imposed on children years ago.

When I met one of my childhood friends the other day, there came a train of memories of the neighborhood in which we grew up. It was a microcosm of the world, with many varieties of people. They were a close-knit group, and I think we knew them all. I think, also, we loved them all—that is, except for one man. I must make a confession: I detested that man. I have since repented of that emotion, but as I look back, I can sense again the intensity of my feeling. His young boys were our friends, but he was my enemy. Why this strong antipathy? Because he whipped his children with strap or stick or whatever came to hand as his vicious anger flared on the slightest provocation.

Perhaps it was because of the home in which I lived, where there was a father who, by some quiet magic, was able to discipline his family without the

use of any instrument of punishment, though on occasion they may have deserved it.

### Child abuse condemned

I have seen the fruits of that neighbor's temper come alive again in the troubled lives of his children. I have since discovered that he was one of that very substantial body of parents who seem incapable of anything but harshness toward those for whose coming into the world they are responsible. I have also come to realize that this man, who walks in the memories of my childhood, is but an example of tens of thousands in this land and uncounted thousands across the world who are known as child abusers. Every social worker, every duty officer in the emergency room of a large hospital, every policeman and judge in a large city can tell you of them. The whole tragic picture is one of beatings, kicking, slamming, and even of sexual assault on small children. And akin to these are those vicious men and women who exploit children for pornographic purposes.

I have no disposition to dwell on this ugly picture. I wish only to say that no man who is a professed follower of Christ and no man who is a professed member of this church can engage in such practices without offending God and repudiating the teachings of his Son. It was Jesus himself who, while holding before us the example of the purity and innocence of children, declared, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones . . . , it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).

Could there be a stronger denunciation of those who abuse children than these words spoken by the Savior of mankind? Do you want a spirit of love to grow in the world? Then begin within the walls of your own home. Behold your little ones and see within them the wonders of God, from whose presence they have recently come.

Brigham Young once said: "A child loves the smiles of its mother, but hates her frowns. I tell the mothers not to allow the children to indulge in evils, but at the same time to treat them with mildness." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe, 2nd ed., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1926, p. 323.)

He further stated, "Bring up your children in the love and fear of the Lord; study their dispositions and their temperaments, and deal with them accordingly, never allowing yourself to correct them in the heat of passion; teach them to love you rather than to fear you" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 320).

### Proper discipline

Of course, there is need for discipline with families. But discipline with severity, discipline with cruelty, inevitably leads not to correction, but rather to resentment and bitterness. It cures nothing and only aggravates the problem. It is self-defeating. The Lord, in setting forth the spirit of governance in his church has also set forth the spirit of governance in the home in these great words of revelation:

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained . . . , only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death." (D&C 121:41, 43-44.)

Behold your little ones and teach them. I need not remind you that your example will do more than anything else in impressing upon their minds a pattern of life. It is always interesting to meet the children of old friends and to

find in another generation the ways of their fathers and mothers.

The story is told that in ancient Rome a group of women were, with vanity, showing their jewels one to another. Among them was Cornelia, the mother of two boys. One of the women said to her, "And where are your jewels?" To which Cornelia responded, pointing to her sons, "These are my jewels." Under her tutelage, and walking after the virtues of her life, they grew to become Gaius and Tiberius Gracchus—the Gracchi, as they were called—two of the most persuasive and effective reformers in Roman history. For as long as they are remembered and spoken of, the mother who reared them after the manner of her own life will be remembered and spoken of with praise also.

May I return again to the words of Brigham Young: "Let it be your constant care that the children that God has so kindly given you are taught in their early youth the importance of the oracles of God, and the beauty of the principles of our holy religion, that when they grow to the years of man and womanhood they may always cherish a tender regard for them and never forsake the truth" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 320).

I recognize that there are parents who, notwithstanding an outpouring of love and a diligent and faithful effort to teach them, see their children grow in a contrary manner and weep while their wayward sons and daughters willfully pursue courses of tragic consequence. For such I have great sympathy, and to them I am wont to quote the words of Ezekiel: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezek. 18:20).

But such is the exception rather than the rule. Nor does the exception justify others of us from making every effort in showing forth love, example, and correct precept in the rearing of those for whom God has given us sacred responsibility.

## Children of God

Nor let us ever forget the need to respect these, our little ones. Under the revealed word of the Lord, we know they are children of God as we are children of God, deserving of that respect which comes of knowledge of that eternal principle. In fact, the Lord made it clear that unless we develop in our own lives that purity, that lack of guile, that innocence of evil, we cannot enter into his presence. Declared he, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

Channing Pollock once wrote these interesting and provocative words: "Contemplating the adolescence through which we scorned the wrong, some of us must wish . . . that we could be born old, and grow younger and cleaner and ever simpler and more innocent, until at last, with the white souls of little children, we lay us down to eternal sleep" ("The World's Slow Stain," *Reader's Digest*, June 1960, p. 77).

## Prayer

Behold your little ones. Pray with them. Pray for them and bless them. The world into which they are moving is a complex and difficult world. They will run into heavy seas of adversity. They will need all the strength and all the faith you can give them while they are yet near you. And they also will need a greater strength which comes of a higher power. They must do more than go along with what they find. They must lift the world, and the only levers they will have are the example of their own lives and the powers of persuasion that will come of their testimonies and their knowledge of the things of God. They will need the help of the Lord. While they are young, pray with them that they may come to know that source of strength which shall then always be available in every hour of need.

I love to hear children pray. I ap-

preciate hearing parents pray for their children. I stand reverently before a father who in the authority of the holy priesthood lays his hands upon the head of a son or daughter at a time of serious decision and in the name of the Lord and under the direction of the Holy Spirit gives a father's blessing.

### **Children are God's gifts**

How much more beautiful would be the world and the society in which we live if every father looked upon his children as the most precious of his assets, if he led them by the power of his example in kindness and love, and if in times of stress he blessed them by the

authority of the holy priesthood; and if every mother regarded her children as the jewels of her life, as gifts from the God of heaven who is their Eternal Father, and brought them up with true affection in the wisdom and admonition of the Lord.

Said Isaiah of old, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13). To which I add, "Great also shall be the peace and the gladness of their fathers and mothers."

For that peace I humbly pray in your behalf as I bear witness of the truth of these things, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Elder James E. Faust**

President Kimball and my beloved brothers and sisters, no one has ever come to this calling with a greater sense of inadequacy than I do at this time. In the sweet agony of the pondering, in the long hours of the days and the nights since last Thursday, I have had the feeling of being completely unworthy and unprepared.

### **Personal witness of Jesus Christ**

I understand that a chief requirement for the holy apostleship is to be a personal witness of Jesus as the Christ and the Divine Redeemer. Perhaps on that basis alone, I can qualify. This truth has been made known to me by the unspeakable peace and power of the Spirit of God.

I acknowledge the soothing and sustaining love of my beloved Ruth, who is as much a part of me as my heart and soul. I wish to express my deep love and affection for each member of our family.

I first learned the names of the ancient and modern apostles in Primary. My mother was one of my teachers. I

am certain that never in her wildest dreams did she ever think that any of those whom she taught would one day sit in the council of the special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was born with partial color-blindness. I have learned to love all of the people in the countries where I have been as a missionary, soldier, or General Authority, regardless of the color of their skins. I hope to be a disciple after the manner and example of President Kimball and the others in their love for all, and especially for the humble, the downtrodden, the poor, the afflicted, the needy, and the poor in spirit. I am mindful that if we forget these, we can in no way be his disciples.

We mark with sadness the passing of our beloved friend and associate Elder Delbert L. Stapley. No one can ever take his place in our affection and in our hearts.

I express appreciation for the support and love of President Kimball, President Tanner, President Romney, President Benson, and all of the Twelve. To President Franklin D. Richards and all of our Brethren of the First Quorum



of the Seventy and other General Authorities, I express my continuing love and appreciation. I pledge to God and his prophet, President Kimball, my life and whatever energy and little ability I may have, fully and completely and without reservation, for I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. I know that the Savior knows that I know that he lives. So I willingly accept the call, the keys, and the charge, and

promise to do the best I know how, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

We shall now hear from Elders F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack H. Goasling, Jr. in that order. You have just sustained them as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder F. Burton Howard

My brothers and sisters, I am deeply grateful for the love and confidence of the First Presidency, and for the sustaining vote of this conference that has brought me here before you at this time. I love the Lord and I love his work.

### Love of the Gospel

At the risk of being unduly personal, I would like to tell you how I feel about the gospel. I love it, not compelled by lack of choice or circumstance nor by the uncritical adoption of patterns commanded from afar; not manipulated, but acting consciously, constructively, purposely, giving a free-will offering of the heart. I want to be involved in the Lord's work—humbly, totally, positively, and honestly; neither subordinating my soul to nor seeking dominion over others, but being freely one with those who are his, sharing and

caring, thankful to be a part of the work wherever it may be, not to escape aloneness nor to fill life with self-deceptive activity, but rather knowingly and willingly doing what must be done; a grateful fellow servant, supporting, building, loving, lending heart and breath to a great cause.

I want to stand firm and fearless, not weakening—for weakness implies pressure from without—but radiating strength and charity truly from within; offensively—not defensively—enthusiastically, sweetly, faithfully, everlasting in harmony with the Lord. May we all become one with him and his prophet and bring harmony into the work that we are in charge of, wherever that may be, in whatever land, I pray for each of us, and most especially for me, as I acknowledge my weaknesses and stand before you to accept this great calling. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## Elder Teddy E. Brewerton

The gospel of Jesus Christ, as we know it, and as it has been restored to the earth, makes people happy. I was speaking to a prominent lawyer from New York a short time ago. He looked

at me in my circumstances and said, "What more could you ever want in life?" I agreed with him, and I analyzed it: I looked into my past, into my present, and of course, realized once again

the great blessings we enjoy as a family unit. I love my wife. The Lord gave her to me. I love the gospel. I know it's true. I told President Kimball two days ago when I met him that for sometime now—for some two to four years—every time I look at his picture, every time I see him at a distance, every time I shake his hand, I know who he is. He is the representative of the Lord on this earth. I know this is true.

### **The Gospel makes people happy**

Because the gospel of Jesus Christ makes us happy, we do desire to share this message with all people. I pledge my life and means and full service to the Lord, to the presidency of the Church, and to any persons who preside over me. I desire to serve. I have said on many occasions recently that one of the things I would dislike the most is not to be involved. It didn't matter what I was doing, just so I was doing something in the Church.

The Savior's example of service was great to us. We should follow and emulate the same.

I pray for a special blessing to be with each of us, that we may catch the vision that President Kimball has as to the great need and urgency that is in the world to expedite the work. I pray that we may be able to do so, of course, with only one thing in mind, and that is to further and strengthen the work.

My wife and I had a very unique experience this last week or two. Something we had planned on doing for nearly twenty years was coming to fruition at the end of this year. We independently looked at each other and said, "I don't know why, but I don't think we should do it." And of course, Thursday we found out why.

I'm grateful for the intervention of the Lord in my life. I pray that I will be worthy of the great many blessings he gives to me, that I might be a great service to the upbuilding of his kingdom, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Jr.**

My beloved brothers and sisters, my heart is filled as I stand before you today and accept this call to serve the Lord. I'm overwhelmed with the responsibility but grateful beyond words of expression for this opportunity to serve my fellowman.

Since last Thursday afternoon when I had the great honor of visiting with President Kimball, things have not been the same. More than ever before I feel my total dependence on the Lord and pray earnestly for his Spirit to attend me and for your sustaining influence and love.

### **Never be weary of good works**

There are many things for which I am grateful today, and I acknowledge

the love, respect, and devotion that I have for a mother and father who taught me as Alma instructed his son Helaman: "Never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart, . . . [to] learn wisdom in [my] youth, . . . to keep the commandments of God" (Al. 37:34-35). I will be eternally grateful for their love and its profound influence in my life.

I'm grateful for relatives and friends who have been patient and understanding. Throughout my life I have been blessed with good friends who have enriched and strengthened me. To some six hundred plus missionaries that were assigned to us as we presided over the Arizona Tempe Mission: we can never forget the lessons learned in that great mission experience. To my good

wife, Gwen, who is one of our Heavenly Father's most noble handmaidens: she has sustained me with an unflinching devotion; she is full of love and faith and possesses a great love of the gospel. She has been an inspiration to me, and I love her with all of my heart. I appreciate and love each of our six children, a son-in-law, and our first grandchild. Their righteous lives have brought nothing but joy and happiness to us.

May I extend a special love and greeting to my son who is in the Language Training Mission and who will leave Tuesday for Padova, Italy.

I bear to you today, my brothers and sisters, my testimony—for which I am grateful—that the Lord Jesus Christ lives, that this is his work, that President Spencer Woolley Kimball is indeed the Lord's prophet upon the earth, and I love him. I pledge to him, to my Brethren of the General Authorities, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I will serve with all of my heart, might, mind, and strength. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing, "Come, Come Ye Saints." After the singing, Elder Robert E. Wells of the First Quorum of the Seventy will address us.

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The congregation joined the Mormon Youth Chorus in singing the hymn, "Come, Come Ye Saints."

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### President Tanner

Elder Robert E. Wells, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Chile-Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay Area, will address us.

He will be followed by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Robert E. Wells

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that you and I might be united by the Spirit, uplifted together, and rejoice in the beautiful things of the gospel. I have in my pocket a silver dollar. On one side it says, "in God we trust." We have been taught by the prophets to trust in the Lord, to trust as did young David when facing the giant Goliath. Now, there is another side to that coin. Would that it read, "and God can trust in you." The Lord wants us to trust in him, but he also wants to be able to trust in us. One of our great prophet leaders said, "To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved" (David O. McKay, "Character," *True to the Faith*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 274).

### Trust

One of the principal purposes of this life is to find out if the Lord *can* trust us. One of our familiar scriptures says, "And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abr. 3:25). We are destined to be tried, tested, and proven during our sojourn on earth to see if we are trustworthy.

The Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that to attain the highest blessing of this life, we will first be tested and proved thoroughly until the Lord is certain that he can trust us in all things, regardless of the personal hazard or

sacrifice involved. The Lord loves all of his children, but he can trust some more than others. It is far better when he can both love *and* trust each one of us.

It has been said that one measure of a man is not how much he is worth, but rather how much he can borrow, how much he can be trusted with someone else's money. I feel that the banker's formula for measuring trust has a direct application to spiritual trust. Just as a banker measures a person's *character, capacity, and capital*, so the Lord might measure our character, our capacity, and our spiritual capital (or spiritual reserves) to identify those in whom he might trust the more.

### Character

Character is part of trust. If there is any doubt as to the borrower's character (his ethics and morals that lead him to meet his obligations on time no matter what sacrifice is required), there will be no trust and no loan will be granted.

The Lord needs to know if he can trust us to do the right thing in every situation. Joseph of Egypt had a fine position as Potiphar's principal steward. Then the wife of Potiphar attempted to entice him to sin. Joseph was far from home and family. He was a trusted slave, but still a slave nonetheless. No one would know or care about his morals. To spurn the woman would certainly bring severe complications to his life, but he was true to his noble character. He fled sin, was caught, and imprisoned. He paid a price for his purity; yet to have done otherwise would have been a tragic flaw in his character. Nephi's strength of character led him to obey a commandment. He could easily have been slain by the wicked Laban. Yet to not obey, when he had the testimony that the Lord would open the way for him to obtain the plates, would have been a flaw in his character. The Lord could trust Joseph and Nephi.

A person of high character testifies and then lives in harmony with his testi-

mony. Martin Luther, at the Diet of Worms, demonstrated this principle of being true to oneself: "I cannot and [I] will not recant, for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I take my stand; I can do no otherwise, so help me God!" (Quoted in "The Building of Human Character," *Gospel Ideals*, David O. McKay, Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953, p. 354.)

Joseph Smith describes Paul's character: "He saw a light, and heard a voice; . . . some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad. . . . But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise." Then Joseph adds his testimony regarding his own vision, revealing his own strength of character; "I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it." (Joseph Smith 2:24-25.) Joseph Smith was a man of great, noble character that the Lord knew he could trust, no matter what the sacrifice.

President David O. McKay said: "Man's chief concern in life should not be the acquiring of gold, or of fame, or of material possessions. It should not be the development of physical prowess, nor of intellectual strength, but his aim, the highest in life, should be the development of a Christlike character." (McKay, *True to the Faith*, p. 32.)

Active membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints builds a Christlike character. Serving a full-time mission builds a Christlike character in whom the Lord can trust.

### Spiritual capacity

Now, capacity is also part of trust. The capacity which the banker looks for in his client is that proven ability to perform as promised. The capacity the Lord looks for in us is that ability to perform to the degree that we become profitable servants unto him. The Lord has given us talents, gifts, and blessings.

He expects us to magnify them and to use them in the service of others if he is to trust us.

The servant who received five talents returned ten and received the praise "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21). The servant who had received two talents returned four talents, and he received equal praise with the first. However, the Lord chastised the slothful servant that received one talent for not multiplying that which had been given to him. The principle is clear: The Lord likes to see capacity double; he likes to see his servants double that which has been given to them—in talents or in responsibilities. It is evident that President Kimball, our great president, also likes to see things double. He likes to see double the number of missionaries, double the number of new faithful members coming into the Church, double the attendance at sacrament meeting, and so on. I believe that each one of us has a sacred responsibility to multiply our capacity and our performance in every measurable way. If we do so, the Lord can better trust our capacity as his servants.

There are many areas besides Church service in which we could make a sustained effort to increase our capacity. We should strive to increase our technical capacity in our daily bread-winning labors. We should strive to improve our capacity as parents and teachers. We should multiply our capacity as member-missionaries in asking the Golden Questions and in sharing with everyone. We should improve our capacity as informed citizens, as Christian neighbors giving service to others. The Lord can trust us according to our capacity. He can trust us in proportion to what we have done with that which he has given us. Active membership in the Mormon church builds both spiritual and temporal capacity. Serving a full-time mission develops personal capacity that the Lord can trust.

Spiritual capacity is also part of trust. The banker looks at capital as both a reserve which the client has available with which to meet emergencies, as well as a measure of the client's commitment to the venture. On the spiritual side of the coin, we might say that the Lord is looking for *both* a spiritual reserve in the individual with which he would meet life's emergencies, as well as a measure of the person's commitment to His kingdom.

### Spiritual reserves

Spiritual capital in a sense is an investment each has made in righteous living. It is an asset—in reserve—upon which we may draw in time of need. How do we develop spiritual capital and reserves? We need to make an investment in time studying the scriptures and the words of our living prophets; an investment in more meaningful communication with our Father in Heaven; an investment in service to others; an investment in unconditional, unselfish love of others; an investment in missionary labor, which lays up in store blessings and forgiveness of our sins; an investment in being wiser parents and more obedient children; an investment in doubling our performance in every calling. These investments will provide such spiritual capital and reserves that the Lord can truly trust us to overcome the temptations and frustrations of the world.

Our forefathers built great spiritual reserves by investing in sacrifice. They could face any challenge because they knew that their individual lives were in order and that they were the favored ones of heaven because of the sacrifices they made in giving up everything that was dear to them in order to follow the prophet. They suffered persecutions. They went out as missionaries, leaving families behind. They left producing farms and well-built homes to go out into dry deserts or cold mountains to begin again. The Prophet Joseph said "that a religion that does not require the

sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (*Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, p. 58).

Active membership in Christ's church builds strong spiritual capital and reserves. Serving a full-time mission builds unwavering spiritual capital and reserves.

### Trust and love

I read from Doctrine and Covenants 124:20: "My servant . . . may be trusted because of the integrity of his heart; and for the love which he has to my testimony," he adds, "I, the Lord, love him."

I solemnly testify as a witness that

God lives and loves us; that Jesus Christ, his divine Son, stands glorified and exalted at the head of this church which bears his holy name; that the legal and authorized mouthpiece of the Lord here on earth is our living prophet who guides this great and divine church which was restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who has just been released as President of the Texas San Antonio Mission, will now speak to us.

He will be followed by Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone

And any man that shall go and preach this gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst." (D&C 84:80.)

### Time for serving the Lord

For the past two years our family has served a mission in Texas. It has been glorious and fulfilling beyond all expectations. When we first arrived, Sister Featherstone went to the Lord and said: "We don't have much time. Please let me learn quickly so that the work will go forth."

Later she said, "The Lord has answered my prayers. He taught me several great lessons. One of those lessons came after the first three or four weeks

in the mission field. I was unable to find a few minutes each day to repair to a quiet spot. When I was home I would take about forty-five minutes in the afternoon and go out and curry down my Arabian horse. I would retreat into a world of my own for those few minutes."

She could not find time for even a few minutes for herself in the mission field. She went to the Lord and knelt in prayer and said, "Please, Heavenly Father, help me to find some time for myself while I am here."

And she said that just as clear as anything in this world the words came into her mind, saying, "My daughter, this is not your time; this is my time." We have attempted to work with all our energy while we were on his time. And that work standard is compared to our work standard and not someone else's.

Let me share with you some of the "faith" experiences of the messengers with whom we have served.

### Faith of fellow missionaries

Elder and Sister Weidel wrote in their weekly letter: "Please, may we take a few moments to tell you of a spiritual experience this week. Friday Elder Curtis, who was splitting with Elder Aloï, came to work with us and afterwards we took them home. Elder Aloï invited us in to see what a real elders' apartment looks like. He went through the back door to open the front door, and in a moment he came out beaming.

'Elder, come and see what has been brought to us.' There on the table was a large supply of groceries. After a while Elder Curtis told us that Elder Aloï and his companion had found a family that didn't have anything to eat, so they took all of their own food out to them. Our hearts just about broke," wrote Sister Weidel. "The Lord does take care of his own."

One of the sweet, widowed sister missionaries, Lorna Call Alder, said in her weekly letter to me: "The experiences of my mission have strengthened my testimony greatly. I cannot remember when I gained a testimony, but I do remember many experiences that have enriched and built upon the foundation I have. Of the many humbling experiences I've had, these past eight months have brought me closer to the Lord than any other period. I've lived through three revolutions in Mexico, which really built my testimony. Writing lessons for the Church brings one very close to the Lord, and he did bless me with more than I can tell you. But this mission has given me more twenty-four-hour spirituality than I have ever had.

"Other very spiritual uplifts in my life were times my sons were on their missions and they asked me to read the Book of Mormon while they were gone. My husband died while my oldest son was in Chile on his mission, and I was really humbled during that trying period. I am thankful for this experience of hard work and great blessings. With

humility and thanksgiving, Sister Alder."

Some months back we had a lovely couple assigned to our mission. Before they arrived, I received a letter from their daughter. In part she said: "Dear President Featherstone, you are getting two of the most wonderful folks in the world in a few weeks to serve in your mission for eighteen months. They are just tickled pink to be serving under you. They told me they plan to do whatever you tell them to do. You enjoy mom and dad. We'll miss them, so please take good care of them while they are there."

Most of our missionaries come into the field because they love the Lord Jesus Christ and they desire to serve him and bring souls unto him. There are a few, however, who rationalize themselves out of a call or try to justify poor performance in the mission field—like the man who received his pay envelope and noticed that he had been shorted five dollars. He went to the paymaster and said, "You shorted me five dollars in my pay envelope this week."

The paymaster responded, "Well, I have been expecting you. I noticed you didn't come in complaining last week when I overpaid you five dollars."

The fellow said, "Well, I can tolerate one mistake, but not two in a row."

Thousands of mature couples and widowed missionaries could be called if they would simply make themselves available. Many of us understand the blessings that come when children and grandchildren kneel down at night and say, "Dear Heavenly Father, please bless grandma and grandpa, who are out in Texas on a mission."

Sister Olsen mothered twelve children, and she supported all of her sons on missions. Now they are supporting her on a mission. I have felt the love between missionaries and their families every day of my mission.

Another fine young elder was called on a mission. At the time, he drove cars across the country for a for-

eign car company. When his boss, who was not LDS, heard he was going to be gone for two years to serve a mission, he said, "If you will stay at home and work for me, I will give you a \$28,000 Ferrari." Elder Grannis completed his mission a month ago as a presiding zone leader.

Another elder entered the mission just after I arrived in San Antonio. He came from a large family. The father found that he needed to pick up a part-time job to help support his son. This was not quite enough, and so the sweet mother went to work in the school lunch program so that she could be home when her children were home. Even with this additional money, the elder fell a little further behind each month. A choice friend occasionally gives me several \$100 bills to share where they are needed. When I interviewed this elder, I asked him how he was doing financially. His eyes clouded up, and he said was really trying, but his folks weren't sending him quite enough. He said, "President, I haven't been wasting. I haven't eaten anything for three days, trying to cut back." Then he said, "Even my little sister is helping. She received a one-dollar bill for her birthday, and she put it in an envelope and sent it to me because she thought I needed it more than she did." Then he wept openly. I reached into my shirt pocket, and extracted two crisp \$100 bills, and said, "A choice friend of mine asked me to give these to you." He put his head down in his hands and was overcome.

Elder Daniel Gifford was promised in his patriarchal blessing that he would serve closely with a General Authority while he was on his mission. He wondered how this would be when he received his mission call to Texas, where the mission president had only served two or three months. While he was in the Missionary Training Center listening to the final session of October general conference, he heard President Tanner announce that the next speaker would be Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of

the Seventy and newly called president of the Texas San Antonio Mission. When Elder Gifford was later called to be an assistant to the president, he shared his patriarchal blessing promise with us. Do you think he has any question about whose work this is?

One elder who was transferred from another mission wanted to go home. He knew his parents and bishop wanted him to stay and complete his mission. In one of the many interviews we had, he said that five previous elders in his ward had abandoned their missions and had returned home early. I thought what a great disservice the first elder did to the other young men who followed his poor example. I made a solemn vow that this elder would not go home until his mission was completed successfully. Every week for thirteen to fifteen weeks he would write in his letter to the president all the reasons he should be released from his mission. Each week I wrote a letter of response.

After all these weeks I received a letter which appeared the same as the others—until I got to the P.S. He said, "President, you are winning and you know it." I sat in my office, and tears filled my eyes.

Vince Lombardi said, "The harder you fight for something, the harder it is to surrender." This elder completed his mission as a great presiding zone leader. He has a great warmth and a great talent to teach; he loves and cares for people; and he is extremely spiritual. He returned home with an honorable release from a very successful mission, married a beautiful girl in the temple, and now they live near the temple where they visit regularly. This elder set a great example for all prospective missionaries from his ward.

Elder Sheffield has been under the knife eleven times in major surgery and many more times in surgery lasting less than an hour. The greatest desire of his life was that the surgery would make him acceptable for a mission. A year before he entered the mission field, he had



his final operation. Since he has been on his mission, he has averaged seventy to eighty hours a week in proselyting. He is greatly loved by all.

He has been a great blessing to missionaries who thought they had problems. In one interview his companion told me that Elder Sheffield's shoulder separates and falls out of place quite often. When this happens he is in severe pain. It happens most often during the night. When I interviewed Elder Sheffield, I suggested that we put him in a local hospital here and have the doctors do what needed to be done to correct this problem. He looked me in the eye, and with a sternness seldom seen he said, "President, I have spent most of my life in hospitals, and when I complete my mission I am returning to several more major surgical operations. I promised the Lord that if he would let me serve a mission, I would not spend one day in the hospital during the two years no matter how sick I was or how much I suffered."

### Blessings of a mission

What are the blessings of a mission? "Can ye tell?" (Al. 26:2).

Maybe Brother and Sister William Keith Clark can. "Dear President Featherstone," they wrote, "we were happy to receive your letter. I'm sure we love you already." (Bless them, they didn't even know me, and yet they could love me.) They continued: "We are not too young anymore. William Keith Clark is eighty-one years old. He has been a bishop's counselor, a bishop, and a patriarch for thirty-one years. I, Ellen Clark, am seventy-six years of age. I have been a music director and a teacher in all the organizations of the Church, ward and stake. We have had an abundant life and love to teach the gospel. We have ten children, all married in the temple and working in the

Church. We had our reunion recently—fifty-six grandchildren and twenty-six great-grandchildren! This is four missions for my husband and three for me. Our happiest moments are teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ." Every missionary is a story of love and sacrifice. I love them so much. Their great devotion to the cause, their love for the Lord, and their willingness to serve him, whose work this is, will bless their lives and their posterity forever.

### All to hear the Gospel

You see, my beloved brothers and sisters, every soul should have the privilege of hearing about the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who respond to the call to be a missionary shall "not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of [their] head[s] shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst." (D&C 84:80.)

We must seek out every soul and do it with the pure love of Christ.

We must not judge the people. We do not know who God has prepared, but we do know as the Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

God bless that *all—all*—who may be able to serve will make themselves available for a mission call. The blessings are sure, I know, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Elder Faust, I am sure the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will sustain me in our expression of love and our complete vote of sustaining you in your new call, and as well, we greet you three new Brethren warmly, knowing you will help shoulder the tremendous opportunities that rest upon our shoulders.

### Shared ancestry

When I think of my father, I call him *my* father; but my two brothers and two sisters would remind me that he isn't just *my* father, he is *our* father.

In thinking of my grandfather, if I were to claim him as mine alone, not only my brothers and sisters would remind me that grandfather is *our* grandfather, but my first cousins would join in the chorus to say, "He is *our* grandfather, as well." If I were to mention my great-grandfather as mine, second cousins would add their voices and remind me that great-grandfather is *ours*.

It is apparent, then, that *ours* is a shared ancestry. We shouldn't think back and say "mine, mine, mine"; we should say "ours, ours, ours." The farther back we reach, the greater the chorus swells.

It has become apparent that genealogical research efforts are being duplicated. To determine the extent to which such duplication exists, I took my genealogical records to a professional research institute. They compared my records with their name pool and determined that they already had ninety-five percent of my records in their file. That means that only five percent of my records are unique to me. Thirty-four other clients shared my ancestry. I was rather amazed with this and wondered if such a high rate of duplication existed among the general population. At my request the institute took a sampling of clients from all parts of the United States, members of the Church and

nonmembers. These names were compared with records in their name pool, and it was determined that eighty percent were duplicates. Only twenty percent were unique.

I found through a study made by another institution that I have at least 348 first, second, and third cousins, all of whom could be searching for the same pair of second great-grandparents.

From this you can see that duplication is tremendous in genealogical research. It is for this basic reason that President Kimball has directed us that we should seek out our ancestors back four generations. After that we should work together as a Church through the records extraction program.

### Four generation program

What is our responsibility, then?

Let's think first of the four generation program. Since President Kimball's address in April conference there has been a great upsurge in genealogical activity. People feel that the task of genealogy is now "do-able." Many "brother and sister" families are grouping together to review their four-generation records to make sure that the information is accurate. For example, in my family I have five children. Those five children are what can be described as a "brother and sister" family. They, with my wife and me helping them, are going back over our four-generation sheets. Soon we will know that everything in those four-generation sheets is accurate. We will then as a family prepare not six or seven sets, but one set of family group record forms.

The four-generation program is somewhat like serving a full-time mission. When called as full-time missionaries, we concentrate completely on this most important divine task. When we complete those missions, we don't lose interest in missionary work. We remain interested in missionary work but

with a less concentrated emphasis than during this full-time service.

### Records extraction program

Our four-generation assignment is like serving the full-time mission. When we have, as a "brother and sister" family, submitted the family group sheets, we have in a sense completed our genealogical mission. This does not mean that we lose interest in genealogy. We can still exercise our free agency and research back as far as we wish. However, there is another way for us to turn our hearts to our fathers. Let me illustrate the advantages and need for the records extraction program.

If you were to come to Salt Lake City and wanted to call me on the telephone, you would use the telephone book to find my number. Suppose as you opened the telephone book, you discovered that names were listed in a chronological order on the basis of when the telephones were installed and also that there wasn't just one telephone directory for Salt Lake City, but several. You would first wonder which book listed me and then start thumbing through the book to discover when our telephone was installed, in order to find the number.

If someone were to cut up the telephone books and rearrange all the listings alphabetically and put them in one book, how simple it would be to find the number.

A number of years ago, if you wanted to do genealogical research, it was necessary to travel to the locality where you thought the records of your ancestors would be and receive permission from the vicar, priest, or custodian of the records to search them in pursuit of your ancestry.

The Church recognized the tremendous burden to Church members of the cost in time and money of international travel, and it was determined that the Genealogical Department would send someone to secure per-

mission to microfilm the records and then let the Church members use these microfilms in a setting much more convenient to their homes. Records are recorded in chronological sequence much like the telephone numbers being listed according to the date the telephones were installed.

This is where we are.

Where are we going?

The stakes will soon be introducing a process whereby we can take all the names from a microfilm, place them on a card, and the computers will arrange them alphabetically. This is called records extraction. These alphabetized name lists will be like a telephone book which can be the basis for not only temple work but also other future references.

As I sit at a microfilm reading machine and take every name—one by one—from these past records, I do this for everyone whose ancestors are on these records. Hereafter, they will not have to hunt them like a needle in a haystack, but once and for all these names will be rearranged and prepared telephone-book style.

### Parallel to missionary work

I'm reminded that now I must think of mortal generations, but it has also occurred to me that reaching back one premortal generation leads me to our Eternal Father, and I suddenly realize that every name I see in the record is my brother or my sister. There is a parallel to this in missionary work where we knock on every door.

Let us appreciate the efforts of the past and the workers who have labored so diligently. All the effort in genealogical research of the past is wonderful and has given us a base on which to build.

We look with reverence and awe at the contribution of the pioneers. We live with them in their struggles and hardships as some came across the plains pushing handcarts. We are filled with love and reverence for the handcarts and especially the hands that prop-

elled them. We express no depreciation for their mode of travel.

In our day we have air travel approaching and even beyond the speed of sound. There are computers that at our command help immeasurably in reaching back and aiding us to turn our hearts to the fathers.

Using the technological blessings of today does not depersonalize; it modernizes the quest for our roots.

From the perspective of our Father in Heaven, what must we accomplish?

We must make available all the exalting blessings of the gospel to all of his children who have ever lived, if they choose to accept them.

At what rate are we progressing?

As members of the Church we are identifying approximately one million names a year for these sacred ordinances. At that rate it would require a

thousand years, or a millennium, to identify one billion names. I'm not sure his time schedule will allow us a millennium for each billion of his children who have lived.

With his blessings—spiritual blessings, technological blessings—we can accelerate the availability of exalting opportunities to his children who are awaiting our expression of love in turning our hearts to them. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

## President Ezra Taft Benson

### Genealogy

In the April general conference of this year, President Spencer W. Kimball said: "I feel the same sense of urgency about temple work for the dead as I do about the missionary work for the living, since they are basically one and the same. . . .

"The First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve," he continued, "recently gave careful consideration as to how we can lengthen our stride in this tremendously important responsibility. . . .

"We want to emphasize again and place squarely upon the shoulders of . . . individuals and their families the obligation to complete the four-generation program. Families may extend their pedigree beyond the four generations if desired.

" . . . We are introducing a Church-wide program of extracting names from

genealogical records. Church members may now render second-mile service through participating in this regard in extracting these names in this program supervised by the priesthood leaders at the local level." ("The True Way of Life and Salvation," *ENSIGN*, May 1978, p. 4.)

This announcement will make sweeping changes in the mechanics of genealogical research and name submission for temple ordinance work. To determine the effect on us individually and collectively as family organizations, let us consider what has and what has not changed.

### Unchanged responsibilities

First, I mention some things which have not changed:

1. The Lord's mandate given in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants has not changed: "Brethren,

shall we not go on in so great a cause? . . .

"Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple . . . a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptation." (Verses 22, 24.)

2. Our responsibility to keep a journal and to write our own personal histories and those of our ancestors, particularly those who belong to the first four generations of our pedigree, has not changed.

3. Our responsibility to make certain that all living family members have the opportunity to receive the ordinances of the temple has not changed.

4. Our responsibility to compile our books of remembrance, including the submission of the names of our ancestors for at least the first four generations, and to have the temple ordinances performed in their behalf has not changed.

5. Our responsibility to organize our families at the immediate family level begins when a couple is married. The grandparent family organization develops as children from the immediate family marry and have children. Through such family organizations, every family in the Church should become actively involved in missionary work, family preparedness, genealogy and temple work, teaching the gospel, and cultural and social activities. These vital responsibilities certainly have not changed.

### Changes in the program

Next, consider some things which have changed:

1. The four-generation program has changed in a very significant way. In the past each individual was responsible for the submission of his or her four-generation family group record forms. December 1978 marks the end of the old (current) four-generation program. Beginning July 1979, the Church will

accept newly prepared pedigree charts and family group record forms from family organizations, rather than from individuals. In the interim between now and July 1979, members of the Church are encouraged to organize as families—each individual with his brothers, sisters, and parents—to compare the information on the family group sheets which they have in common, check the accuracy of the information, verify the dates, and formulate *one* record to be submitted on behalf of *all* family members appearing on the group sheet. This process repeats itself next with the parents (if still living), and so on until all generations are completed, verified, and corrected as necessary. You can readily see the importance of the family organization.

2. A second major change is that original research beyond the four-generation level will be accepted but will no longer be required of individual members or individual families in the Church. Instead, the Church has assumed the responsibility to begin a massive record-gathering and extraction program in order to prepare names for temple work.

Those who are acquainted with Latter-day Saint scriptures and the process of genealogical research will recognize that the extraction program is but a first step in the overall program of preparing a Church book of remembrance "worthy of . . . acceptation." The extraction program is primarily aimed at more efficient identification and processing of names for individual temple ordinance work. It solves the immediate need to provide many more names for the operation of the temples.

In the past it was not uncommon for family organizations to spend an inordinate amount of time, money, and effort in search of a given ancestor. Now it would seem that once a reasonable, conventional effort has been made to locate a given ancestor, if he or she cannot be found, the family organization can assume its responsibility completed and move on to the next line or ancestor

in question, leaving the processing of the unidentifiable ancestor to the extraction/indexing program.

### Ancestral organizations

Now may I say a word about ancestral-type family organizations. Ancestral family organizations are comprised of descendants of a common ancestral couple. The major purpose for organizing or perpetuating an ancestral family organization is to coordinate genealogical activity on common ancestral lines. When ancestral family organizations deviate from this major objective and seek primarily to provide social, cultural, or other types of activities, they take over the legitimate domain of the immediate and grandparent organizations. With the change announced by President Kimball, a gradual but definite transition should occur so that the genealogical work in progress is completed. The immediate and grandparent family organizations should then be assigned the responsibility of reunions and soliciting of funds.

Another legitimate function of the ancestral organization is to provide resource material from which the immediate and grandparent family organizations can draw to complete family histories—especially on their first four generations. Thus the ancestral organizations may accumulate, properly file, catalog, and preserve histories, photographs, letters, manuscripts, diaries, journals, and published books.

Again, I emphasize that every family in the Church should belong to an immediate and, insofar as possible, a grandparent family organization. Ancestral organizations exist only for the coordination of genealogical activity, which includes family histories. Once this function has been accomplished the ancestral family organization might well be dissolved, or at least reduced in importance, in favor of the immediate and grandparent organizations.

Once the families in the Church become organized as the prophet has

counseled, and after we have done all we can as a church and as family organizations to identify our progenitors, then perhaps we may qualify for this prophetic blessing spoken of by President Brigham Young:

"You will enter into the Temple of the Lord and begin to offer up ordinances before the Lord for your dead. . . . Before this work is finished, a great many of the Elders of Israel in Mount Zion will become pillars in the Temple of God, to go no more out: they will eat and drink and sleep there; and they will often have occasion to say—'Somebody came into the Temple last night; we did not know who he was, but he was no doubt a brother, and told us a great many things we did not before understand. *He gave us the names of a great many of our forefathers that are not on record, and he gave me my true lineage and the names of my forefathers for hundreds of years back.* He said to me, 'You and I are connected in one family; there are the names of your ancestors; take them and write them down, and be baptised and confirmed, and save such and such ones, and receive of the blessings of the eternal Priesthood for such and such an individual, as you do for yourselves.' This is what we are going to do for the inhabitants of the earth. When I look at it, I do not want to rest a great deal, but be industrious all the day long; for when we come to think upon it, we have no time to lose, for it is a pretty laborious work." (*Journal of Discourses*, 6:295; italics added.)

In keeping with the principles which I have outlined to you, I have organized my family, as I'm sure scores of you have done—the Ezra Taft Benson Family Organization—as a grandparent family. Our children and married grandchildren are organizing as part of that organization and as individual, immediate family organizations.

Under my direction we are in the process of verifying our pedigree charts and supporting family group record forms in anticipation of submitting them to the Church as a family in 1979.

I have further commissioned the preparation of family histories by my immediate family members. My wife and I have tried to set the example by preparing and distributing a brief summary of our own personal histories to our posterity. Further histories have been prepared, or are in the process of preparation, on each of our ancestors on my lines and my wife's lines as they appear on our first pedigree chart for four generations back. To our children this represents five generations of family histories; to the grandchildren, six; and the great-grandchildren, seven.

In the preparation of these histories, we have sought to write them in a common style and follow a common format. They have been typed on genealogical-size sheets so they might conveniently be included in the family book of remembrance. An effort has been made to keep them brief, with a goal that none of them would exceed ten genealogical-size pages. We have taken pains to have them reproduced by offset press so that the quality of the print would encourage use and reading. It is also our intent to add pictures of each ancestor to his or her history. We have encouraged members of our family organization to use these histories as a basis for family home evenings, held in their immediate families, to teach their children appreciation, love, and respect for their ancestors.

Now, if you have not already done so, may I encourage you to organize your immediate and grandparent families and prepare your individual and family histories.

### **"Go on in a great cause"**

"Let us go to and attend to our ordinances, then when we go to the spirit world and meet with father, mother, brother or sister they cannot rise up and accuse us of negligence. . . . These [temple] ordinances have been revealed to us; we understand them, and unless we attend to them we shall fall under

condemnation." (Wilford Woodruff, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:327.)

"Shall we not," as the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, "go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, . . . and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.

" . . . Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in His holy temple . . . a book containing the records of our dead, *which shall be worthy of all acceptance.*" (D&C 128:22, 24; italics added.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the General Priesthood Meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 7 P.M.

The Sunday morning session will be broadcast by many radio and television stations in the Western United States and Canada, and by way of Oceanic cable to members assembled in many chapels in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

KSL radio and KIRO radio at Seattle will rebroadcast sessions over extensive distances, beginning at midnight following each Conference day's proceedings.

The nationwide CBS radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has

been furnished by the Mormon Youth Chorus. We are thankful for the presence of you young people and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The Chorus will now sing in closing, "I Need Thee Every Hour." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder James M. Para-

more of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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"I Need Thee Every Hour" was sung by the Chorus.

Elder James M. Paramore offered the benediction.

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## GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

### THIRD SESSION

The General Priesthood Meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 7:00 P.M. on Saturday, September 30, 1978, where President Spencer W. Kimball presided and conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a combined choir from men of the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus, directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Kimball opened this session with the following remarks:

#### President Spencer W. Kimball

Brethren, we are assembled in the General Priesthood session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall and Salt Palace and in approximately 1469 locations in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Australia, the Philippines, Korea, Japan, and Hong Kong.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood members assembled here in the Tabernacle or elsewhere. We commend all members of the priesthood who have made ar-

rangements to participate in this important meeting.

We note that Elders Henry D. Taylor and Bernard P. Brockbank are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall; Elders John H. Vandenberg and Charles A. Didier are seated on the stand in the Salt Palace; and Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Derek A. Cuthbert preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

For the benefit of those brethren in outlying areas who may not have heard the changes made during the first session of this Conference, we announce that Elder James E. Faust was sustained this morning as a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles to fill the vacancy created by the death of Elder Delbert L. Stapley. Also, Elder William Grant Bangerter was sustained to serve as a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Elders F. Burton Howard, Teddy E. Brewerton, and Jack E. Goasling, Jr., were sustained to serve as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the combined men from the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Brothers Jerold Ottley and Robert Bowden with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the Choir singing, "Rise Up, O Men of God." Following the singing, Elder Theodore M. Burton of the First



Quorum of the Seventy, who is Supervisor of the Europe Area, will offer the invocation.

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The Choir sang the hymn, "Rise Up, O Men of God."

The invocation was offered by Elder Theodore M. Burton.

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

The Choir will now favor us with, "Pilgrim's Song," after which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder LeGrand

Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

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"Pilgrim's Song" was rendered by the Choir.

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### President Kimball

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this evening. He will be followed by Elder Dean L. Larsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder LeGrand Richards

It's a thrill, brethren, to stand here this evening and see this great audience of priesthood filling this sacred Tabernacle. Having had the privilege of serving as the Presiding Bishop of the Church for fourteen years, and thus, the president of the Aaronic Priesthood, I am thrilled to see all of the boys of the Aaronic Priesthood here tonight, and I imagine that will be true in the other buildings where the priesthood are listening in. We are all thrilled as we go through the Church to find the wonderful attitude that the Saints have toward President Kimball and, particularly, toward the emphasis that he is giving to missionary work. You know that he has indicated that every boy should be a missionary.

I think of when I was a young man, before I was even ordained a deacon, I went to one of our ward meetings in the little country town where I was raised, and two missionaries reported their missions down in the Southern States. In those days they traveled without purse or scrip, and they had to sleep out many nights when they couldn't get entertainment. I don't know whether they said anything unusual that night or not; but if they didn't, the Lord did some-

thing unusual for me, because when I left that meeting, I felt like I could have walked to any mission field in the world, if I just had a call. And I went home, went into my little bedroom, and got down on my knees, and asked the Lord to help me to live worthy so that when I was old enough I could go on a mission. And when the train finally left the station here in Salt Lake and I was headed for the little land of Holland, the last thing I said to my loved ones was, "This is the happiest day of my life."

### Love for missionaries

Before I left on that mission, President Anthon H. Lund, who was then a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, talked to us missionaries, and he said, among other things, "The people will love you. Now," he said, "don't get lifted up in the pride of your hearts and think that they love you because you are better than other people. They will love you because of what you bring to them." I did not understand that then, but before I left the little land of Holland, where I spent nearly three years, I knew what President Lund

meant. I went around saying good-bye to the Saints and the converts who I had brought into the Church, and I shed a thousand tears, as compared to what I shed when I told my loved ones good-bye.

For instance, in Amsterdam I went into a home where I had been the first missionary there, and the little mother, looking up into my face with tears rolling down her cheeks, said, "Brother Richards, it was hard to see my daughter leave for Zion a few months ago, but it's much harder to see you go." I had been the first missionary in that home. Then I thought I could understand what President Lund meant when he said, "They will love you."

I went to tell a man with a little Dutch beard good-bye. He stood erect in the uniform of his country. He got down on his knees and took my hand in his and hugged it and kissed it and bathed it with his tears. And then I thought I could understand what President Lund meant when he said, "They will love you."

Now I like a little story that President Grant used to tell about the love that converts have for their missionaries. He told about a couple who came here from one of the Scandinavian countries. They hadn't been taught much about the gospel. All they knew was that it was true. And so the bishop went to this couple and taught them the law of tithing. They paid their tithing. Then later the bishop went to them and taught them about the fast offering. They paid their fast offering. And then the bishop went to them again to get a donation to help build a ward meetinghouse. They thought that ought to come out of the tithing, but before the bishop got through with them, they paid their donation on the meetinghouse.

Then the bishop went to the father to get his son to go on a mission. Now I can hear President Grant standing here, saying, "That was the straw that broke the camel's back." The man said, "He's our only child. His mother will miss him. We can't let him go." Then the

bishop countered, "Brother So-and-So, who do you love in this world more than anyone else outside of your own relatives?" And he thought for a few minutes. He said, "I guess I love that young man who came up to the land of the midnight sun and taught me the gospel of Jesus Christ." Then the bishop countered, "Brother So-and-So, how would you like someone to love your boy just like that?" The man said, "Bishop, you win again; take him. I'll pay for his mission."

Now you fathers, how would you like someone to love your boys just like that man loved that boy who came up to the land of the midnight sun and taught him the gospel? I heard a missionary up in Oregon giving the report of his mission. He himself was a convert to the Church, and he came down with his fist on the pulpit, and he said, "I wouldn't take a check tonight for a million dollars for the experience of my mission." I sat back of him, and I said to myself, "Would you take a million dollars for your first mission in the little land of Holland?" And I began counting the families that I'd been instrumental in bringing into the Church. What kind of a man would I be if I were to sell them out of the Church for a million dollars? I wouldn't do that for all the money in the world!

### Fruits of missionary labor

The other night I sat in my little study in my apartment and began reminiscing, and I counted ten families that I'd been instrumental in bringing into the Church, and I've lived long enough to see their sons go on missions. I checked with just one of those families here just a few years back when I had to give a talk at a Brigham Young University banquet for the Indians. At that time there were 153 direct descendants of that one family alone. Thirty-five of them had filled full-term missions, and four had done stake missionary work. If you gave them two years apiece, that would be seventy years of missionary

service out of that one family, without counting all the converts that their converts had made. And then one family kept two Indian children in their home—one boy they kept for eight years; he was then in the mission field, and they were paying for his mission. When my companion and I brought that family into the Church, we couldn't look ahead seventy years and see what would become of them.

I checked with another family that I'd been instrumental in bringing into the Church. They couldn't give me details, but they said that when their grandfather died, there were 150 direct descendants in the Church at that time, and five of them were serving as bishops.

I went over these ten families in my mind the other day, thinking of the words of Jesus when he said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

### Joy of serving a mission

What do you suppose I could have done during those few years of my young manhood that would lay away treasures in heaven like the years I spent over there among those Dutch people? Some of them have already passed on, and I love them almost like my own family. I look forward to being able to meet them again when my time comes to join that innumerable group.

Now I have labored so much with the missionaries. I have been on four missions, and presided over two, and I have toured many missions, and love to hear those young men bear their testimonies. For instance, another young man in Oregon in our testimony meeting said that there wasn't a company in this world that could pay him a large

enough salary to get him to leave his missionary work. And he had been in the armed forces and away from home for several years and then out into the mission field. I had a letter here just last week from a missionary from up in Idaho, and I copied a little paragraph from it. I'd like to read it to you. He said this:

"There is no greater work than that of missionary work. My mission has been the most rewarding undertaking in my entire twenty-seven years of life. My life is dedicated to serving the Lord. My heart is overflowing as are the tears of joy that are now coming from my eyes. There is nothing so wonderful—nothing—as tasting the joy and success of missionary labors."

I had a young missionary come in to visit with me as he returned from the Argentine. I knew his people back in Washington, and he had been kept over to help train some of the other missionaries, until he had been away from home for three years. And I said, "Craig, do you feel like it was a waste of time to be in the mission field, that you ought to have been home getting your education and getting ready to settle down?" He said, "Now listen, bishop, if the Brethren want to make me happy, just let them load me on the plane in the morning and let them send me back to the Argentine." You can't put that kind of feeling in the hearts of young people with money. The Lord who creates the feelings of the human breast is the only one who can put that kind of faith into the hearts of his people.

Brethren, after all the missionary service I have had, I wouldn't want to raise a boy and not have him go on a mission, for *his* good and because I think we owe it to the world to share with them the truths of the gospel. And one way to make sure that your boys will go on missions is to start a missionary fund for them and let them keep adding to it, and they will be on their missions from the time that they are young boys. For instance, down in California I went to a ward, and the

bishop has a program of giving to each boy when he's ordained a deacon fifteen dollars out of the missionary fund. Then they ask the father to match it, and then every time the boy is interviewed—for instance, when he's ordained a teacher—they check on his missionary fund. I figured, on a percentage basis, if every ward in the Church had as many missionaries in the field as that ward, we would have 55,500 missionaries. So I provided in my family that every male child who has not been on a mission has a missionary fund so he will know that he is on his mission from the time he is a boy.

God bless you all, and may we not

disappoint our great leader in sending all of our boys on missions, I pray, and I leave you my blessing, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Dean L. Larsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Dean L. Larsen

I would like to speak to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood about faith and courage and about making choices. I hope what I say will help you to face the special challenges you will be required to meet in your maturing years.

### Decisions and consequences

Recently I met a young man who was receiving the missionary discussions. He had read the Book of Mormon and felt he had received answers to his prayers. He was now faced with the decision of whether or not to be baptized.

This was a rather remarkable young man. He had experienced some severe tests in his life, and he had demonstrated great courage and resourcefulness. The prospect of becoming a member of the Church, however, gave him a different kind of challenge.

As we talked about this newest and most important decision with which he was faced, he asked, "Why are so many people critical of Mormons?" He then

described some of the things he had experienced at the hands of friends, family, and fellow employees for having associated with the missionaries. "I'm not sure I can live with that kind of feeling against me if I join the Church," he said. "Why can't I believe what your church teaches, but just go on being a good Christian without becoming a Mormon?"

It isn't difficult for us to know what the consequences will be for this young man if he chooses not to be baptized because of the fear of incurring ill feelings from family and friends. He is, of course, perfectly free to make this choice, but he is *not* free to determine the consequences of that decision.

We may occasionally find ourselves in situations where we are tempted to set aside our identity as Latter-day Saints while we indulge in some thought or act that is unworthy of the trust the Lord has placed in us. We are regularly required to make choices on the basis of what we know to be right. We are free in most instances to make our own decisions, but we are never free

to determine the final outcomes of our choices.

It is not enough for us to know what is right and to believe it is good. We must be willing to stand up and be counted. We must be willing to act in accordance with what we believe under all circumstances. It is of little value for us to believe one way if we behave contrary to that belief in our private actions or in our public performance.

### Courage

Today it requires great courage to be a loyal Latter-day Saint. For many it is not easy, and it will likely not become easier. The tests of our day are severe. This is particularly so for you young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. Being true to the way of life the Lord has given us does not always make us public heroes. Having the courage of our convictions has its own rewards, however. Armin Suckow, Jr., a thirteen-year-old boy from Germany, discovered this. He tells of an interesting experience in a letter he wrote to the *NEW ERA* magazine. Armin says, "We spoke one Christmastime with one of our school teachers about Jesus. He said that after Jesus died, he had gone from the earth and was now dead. As the teacher spoke, I thought about our church and knew that after three days Jesus was resurrected and was seen by many people. Later, then, he ascended into heaven. I had the feeling that I should tell the teacher and the students that the truth was entirely different from what the teacher had just said. The teacher didn't want to hear my opinion at all, but in spite of that, I . . . told them that Jesus was resurrected. It didn't please the teacher at all that I should correct him, but I continued. Then he said that this was simply a matter of opinion. I answered him that anyone can read of this event in the scriptures and that it is so clearly described there that no one can get a different opinion on the story than the one that I had given. After the class the teacher wanted to know to which

church I belonged. I told him that I belonged to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. On that day I had a real good feeling inside of me." ("The Savior Lives!" *NEW ERA*, Dec. 1977, p. 18.)

We have to admire Armin's decision to speak out on what he believed. It was not easy for him, but his action was consistent with what he knew to be right.

### Challenges

Sometimes the challenges we must face in this life are of a very personal nature. They can result from such things as physical handicaps or similar limitations. But even these give us an opportunity to make choices that bring satisfaction and fulfillment into our lives rather than discouragement and defeat. Some of you read in the May 1976 *NEW ERA* about Stephen Farrance, who learned when he was four years old that he had a type of muscle disease that was incurable. His doctors said he would not live beyond his twelfth year. Instead of withdrawing from life and becoming a dejected invalid, Stephen pressed himself into every possible activity. His life was full of enthusiasm and optimism. He invented ways to compensate for his handicaps. He lived six years longer than his doctors had said he would; and though in his last years he had great difficulty in getting about without help, he never lost his enthusiasm, his creativity, or his sense of humor. He not only succeeded in making his own life happier and more productive, but he was also an inspiration and a positive influence to all who knew him. If you young men have not read about Stephen in the *NEW ERA*, I recommend you do so. (See Pene Horton, "Stephen," *NEW ERA*, May 1976, p. 36.)

### Paying the price

Some years ago I coached a high school basketball team through a rather

unusual season. The season began with a number of disappointing losses. Some of the fans and townspeople didn't make a secret of their unhappiness over the team's failures. There was considerable public comment, and it was a challenging time for members of the team. Several of them finally became discouraged and withdrew from the team. Those who remained didn't lose faith in themselves or in their coach. The rough going seemed to be an incentive for them to try even harder.

At mid-season the team began to win their games. They qualified for the district tournament and surprised everyone there by winning a place in the state play-offs. To the amazement of everyone, they went on to win the state championship—the first ever to be won by that school!

Following the celebration and the awarding of trophies after the championship game, I drove several of the team members back to our city. There was silence during much of the ride as we each reflected on the incredible outcome of our season's efforts. Finally, one of the young men spoke. (He had been honored for being one of the outstanding players in the tournament.) "Coach," he said, "I think we were supposed to win tonight."

I was curious to know what had prompted this conclusion. "Why do you think we were *supposed* to win?" I asked.

His response was simple and direct—and I will never forget its impact. "Because we paid the price," he said.

Indeed they had, and I am sure the lessons learned by those young men during that eventful year have been valuable to them throughout their lives.

The nature of the challenges we face in this life is not nearly so important as what we choose to do about them. When we have the courage and faith to live up to the best we know, we fulfill the purpose for which we came to this earth, and we provide an incentive for others to do the same.

The young man to whom I referred in the beginning of my remarks has a very important decision to make. In the final analysis he cannot hedge on his decision. He must be willing to face the consequences of baptism and membership in the Church if he is ever to enjoy the blessings that Church membership can bring. He must be willing to pay the price. This will require much trust and faith on his part. It is so with each of us whenever we face challenging choices. You young men of the Aaronic Priesthood have a tremendous trust placed in you by the Lord, and he expects you to measure up—to stand up and be counted. All of you came here to be winners. The Lord's work will prevail, and you will have much to do with the success of his kingdom.

May God help each of us to "pay the price" so that we may one day be qualified to return to him, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from Elder Dean L. Larsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

## Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Some memories are unforgettable, remaining ever vivid and heartwarm-

ing! One such memory was the mission conference we attended last year at

Dresden, DDR (or East Germany). A president of the Church had not visited there since 1936—a span of over forty years. Now, at last, the prayers of the people were to be answered. President Kimball, it was announced, would be present at the mission conference.

### Saints in Dresden

Over 1,200 people, Saints and investigators, came from far and near to hear the prophet speak. Some of them traveled several hundred miles. As the hour for the meeting approached, it seemed as if there wasn't room for even one more person. Not to be denied this grand experience, one brother obtained an unwieldy ladder and placed it alongside a window so that he could see and hear President Kimball and be part of the congregation. As I looked at him, he smiled, and I understood the message of that smile. He was thrilled and grateful to be present, even though he was poised precariously on the top rung of that fifteen-foot ladder throughout the two-hour session.

There was scarcely a dry eye in that packed audience as President Kimball spoke. He not only blessed and inspired the large congregation, and the brother on the stepladder, but also a sister in a wheelchair, as well. Sister Margarete Hellmann had suffered an ailment of the hip since youth. As the years came and went, the affliction brought her an ever-increasing burden of pain. Finally, she could walk only with the aid of a pair of crutches. To facilitate her travel from place to place, and to alleviate the terrible pain she keenly felt with every single step, some of the Saints contributed money and bought her a wheelchair. But this relief was short-lived. Soon, even sitting in her wheelchair was accompanied by almost unbearable pain. Then an inflammation of the nerves on the left side of her face further intensified her suffering. One day she heard the heartening news: the prophet of the Lord was to be in Dresden. She had one all-consuming de-

sire—to attend the conference and touch the prophet.

She had faith and the absolute conviction that the prophet would not even have to take the time to lay his hands upon her head and give her a blessing. She felt assured that it would be with her as it was with a certain woman who, according to St. Mark, had suffered for twelve years and still grew worse. And “when she had heard of Jesus, . . . she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.” This she did, and Jesus “said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.” (See Mark 5:25-34.)

Sister Hellmann had asked her grandson, Frank, to bring her to the service at an early hour and position her wheelchair near the aisle where the prophet was to pass. This statement from her letter tells the rest of the story in her tender words: “When our prophet came close to me,” she wrote, “he warmly shook my hand and looked at me in the spirit of love, as did those who were with him. After that, I did not feel any more pain—not then, nor any to this day. That is the greatest testimony of my life!”

After the benediction on that memorable day, as we moved through the crowd, the congregation sang, with great fervor, that beautiful hymn, “*Auf Wiedersehen*.” It was an unforgettable experience and a powerful testimony of faith and the power of God.

Brethren, my fervent hope is for every one of us to be as willing as the man on the ladder to inconvenience ourselves for the sake of the gospel. And I would pray that each one of us could develop a faith as strong as that of the sister in the wheelchair.

### Honor priesthood

It is my testimony that the best way in all the world for us to do this is to serve the Lord and be sure we honor our priesthood. We honor our priesthood by making an intrinsic part of our every thought and action those great

teachings that Jesus proclaimed during his glorious ministry on earth and that are still proclaimed today through latter-day revelation. We honor our priesthood through prayer, pure thoughts, clean language, wholesome appearance, service to others, and through striving for the powerful, personal conversion that will help us to withstand the temptations of the day. In addition to being shining examples in our individual lives, let's make sure that we strengthen our homes and families and, at the same time, do all we can to reach out with understanding to encourage and bring blessings into the lives of the single adults of our church.

There is much we can do to strengthen home and family. Among the most important is to inspire our wives and daughters to take advantage of Relief Society. I am sorry to relate that many of our women are not receiving these blessings. If, through your efforts, you can improve this commitment to Relief Society, your families will be blessed.

This fact was dramatically emphasized in a recent statement made by a law enforcement officer in Idaho. He said that in over twenty years he had never had a child brought in for correction where the mother was an active Relief Society woman.

In working together as husbands, wives, sons, and daughters, we can achieve the true meaning of those most thrilling words spoken by Jesus, when he said:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:14-16.)

### Live Gospel principles

If we live the principles of the gos-

pel, we are the fulfillment of the Savior's pronouncement: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). And possessing this light, we can shine among our fellowmen through our lives and deeds, influencing them to glorify our Father in Heaven.

Jesus wants every one of us to know him because of the transforming power of that knowledge and because of the indescribable joy it brings into our lives. But the influence of the gospel is to extend beyond each individual. It is to be as a light that dispels the darkness from the lives of those around us. No one of us is saved solely and simply for himself alone, just as no lamp is lighted merely for its own benefit.

Today there are far too many so-called Christian leaders who are divided over the most fundamental of all Christian doctrines, one about which no faithful member of our church in all the world has the slightest doubt. This schism is dramatically set forth in a recent issue of *Time* magazine and is entitled "New Debate Over Jesus' Divinity." Many modern scholars express the view that "Jesus did not proclaim himself as the eternal Son of God, nor did the early Christians." Seven university theologians in England published a book contending that Jesus was not really God at all. In America much of the same is going on. An eminent clergyman expressed the conviction of many "that Jesus never claimed to be God, nor to be related to him as son." In summarizing, *Time* said that "in view of the new Christology (of the so-called Christian advocates) Christ is not as divine as he used to be." (*Time*, 27 Feb. 1978.)

Such a twisted and compromising viewpoint sounds a clarion call for the priesthood and the sisters, pillars of the Church whose example "is like unto heaven" (Matt. 13:33), to make an even greater effort to move in and fill the tragic void. On the divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the position of the restored church and its members is eloquently stated by Elder James E.



Talmage in these words:

"The solemn testimonies of millions dead and of millions living unite in proclaiming Him as divine, the Son of the Living God, the Redeemer and Savior of the human race, the Eternal Judge of the souls of men, the Chosen and Anointed of the Father—in short, the Christ." (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed., Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1916, pp. 1-2.)

Our church does not and will not in any way compromise its position! It never at any time or place falters, hesitates, or shows any reluctance to bear unwavering testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ. The state of the world being what it is, each priesthood bearer must take advantage of every opportunity to testify of the Savior and teach and exemplify gospel truth, letting his light so shine before friends and strangers alike to perpetuate the truth concerning our Savior, Jesus Christ.

### Testimony

In closing I bear deep and solemn testimony of my absolute conviction of the Savior as expressed in these words from a simple and beautiful poem by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, entitled "I Believe in Christ."

*I believe in Christ—my Lord, my God—  
My feet he plants on gospel sod;  
I'll worship him with all my might;  
He is the source of truth and light.*

*I believe in Christ; so come what may,  
With him I'll stand in that great day  
When on this earth he comes again,  
To rule among the sons of men.*  
(*"The Testimony of Jesus,"* ENSIGN, July 1972, p. 109.)

I testify to you that President Kimball is indeed a mighty prophet of the Lord. His divinely inspired words and example convey the certainty of an unwavering testimony. Upon us he pronounces rich blessings and unbounded love and encouragement. May we follow his great leadership, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our next speaker.

## President Marion G. Romney

Brethren, I have in mind saying a few things about what it takes to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. And this being a priesthood meeting, I presume that each of us holds the priesthood and desires to qualify as a disciple of Christ. On this premise I have chosen as my text the fifth verse of the forty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which reads:

"He that receiveth my law and doeth it, the same is my disciple; and he that saith he receiveth it and doeth it

not, the same is not my disciple, and shall be cast out from among you."

### Becoming Christ's disciple

Christ's invitation to become his disciple is universal. He extends it to everyone. His call and promise is "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

And he has said "that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto

me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

Jesus put no money price tag on his invitation. Nephi quotes him as saying, "Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, buy milk and honey, without money and without price" (2 Ne. 26:25).

This does not mean, however, that because he put no money price on it that there is no cost involved. There is a cost to be paid in becoming a disciple of Christ, a very real cost. But the cost is a performance cost, not a money price.

Jesus taught this very plainly. He further taught that those who profess to follow him should realize the cost at the outset.

Here are some examples. In the Gospel according to Luke he said:

"It came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

"And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

"Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-62.)

Jesus was not looking for, or calling, men to do lip service only. He wanted them to realize that following him meant effort and sacrifice. Luke tells us of an occasion when "there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife,

and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:25-27, 33.)

In these seemingly harsh statements, Jesus was not specifying "literal hatred toward one's family . . . as a condition of discipleship." He was emphasizing "the preeminence of duty toward God over personal" or worldly demands of those who would be his disciples. (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, p. 453.)

As to counting the cost, Jesus pointed out the wisdom of doing so even with respect to mundane projects:

"Which of you," he said, "intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

"Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

"Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28-30.)

### Dedication and obedience

In this last dispensation, the Lord has taught the importance of complete dedication to his service and strict obedience to his commandments as emphatically as he did during his earthly ministry. For example, in 1831, the first year after the Church was organized, the Lord revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was visiting the Saints then assembled in Jackson County, Missouri, that they were in "the land of promise, . . . the place for the city of Zion" (D&C 57:2). This good news heightened the enthusiasm of the Saints, who were already eagerly anticipating the blessings of Zion as it would be in its glory.

At this juncture, to calm them down a little and impress upon them the fact that the establishment of Zion would depend upon their obedience to his law, the Lord said to them:

"Hearken, O ye elders of my church, and give ear to my word, and learn of me what I will concerning you, and also concerning this land unto which I have sent you.

"For verily I say unto you, *blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.*

"For after much tribulation come the blessings. . .

"Remember this, which I tell you before, that you may lay it to heart." (D&C 58:1-2, 4-5; italics added.)

The Lord was reminding the Saints there that there was some tribulation ahead before they could enjoy the promised blessings of Zion as it will be in its glory.

He was warning them that in Jackson County, Missouri—which was Zion then and will yet be Zion—where they were going, the law—that is, his law—had to be kept. Men had to be true disciples. This was clear notice to the Saints in Missouri, and it should and must be clear notice to us, that keeping the law of God is the principal thing that all who truly become his disciples must learn.

A week later, just before the Prophet left Missouri for Kirtland, the Lord gave through him a revelation in which he emphasized the importance of complete and total dedication:

"Behold, blessed, saith the Lord, are they who have come up unto this land with an eye *single to my glory*. . .

"For those that live shall inherit the earth, and those that die shall rest from all their labors. . .

"Yea, blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, *who have obeyed my gospel*; for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth. . .

"And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, . . . *they that are faithful and diligent* before me.

"Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength*; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him." (D&C 59:1-5; italics added.) *Confessing and accepting is not sufficient.*

Then he named some specific things that these Saints had to learn to do before they prospered in Zion:

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

"Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day." (D&C 59:6-9.)

These are some of the specific things the Lord told the Missouri Saints to do in order to prove themselves to be his disciples when he first took them to Jackson County, Missouri, the center stake of Zion.

His concluding instruction was: "Learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

### A great promise

This is not the occasion to review the history of the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri. Suffice it to say that they did not demonstrate the necessary dedication and commitment to establish Zion at that time. On February 24, 1834, after they had been "driven and smitten by the hands of [their] enemies" (D&C 103:2), the Lord told the Prophet Joseph that the reason he had permitted

their expulsion was so "that those who call themselves after my name might be chastened for a little season with a sore and grievous chastisement, because they *did not hearken altogether unto the precepts and commandments which I gave unto them*" (D&C 103:4; italics added). They were not yet his disciples in the true sense of the term. He did, however, give them this great promise:

"They shall . . . begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour.

"And by hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet, and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it forever and ever." (D&C 103:6-7.)

That's our great promise. We will never cease to prevail until the Lord establishes his Zion in this world. The true discipleship of the priesthood of God will determine how fast we move toward that great consummation as we, through living the gospel, fight the debauchery and the wickedness that's going on in this world.

And then the Lord said, "Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake; for whoso layeth down his life for my sake shall find it again" (D&C 103:27).

And this is a shocking statement to me: "And whoso is not willing to lay down his life for my sake is not my disciple" (D&C 103:28).

### Oath and covenant of the Priesthood

As we contemplate this great declaration, it may be well for us to be reminded of the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood, by which all of us who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood are bound. Following a discussion of the "Holy Priesthood" (D&C 84:6) and the "lesser priesthood" (D&C 84:30), the revelation which gives the oath and covenant of the priesthood continues:

"Whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods [the greater priesthood and the lesser priesthood—meaning, of course, the Melchizedek and the Aaronic] of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

"And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord:

"For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

"And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved."

And then this warning:

"But whoso breaketh this covenant [of the priesthood] after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." (D&C 84:33-41.)

I hope and pray that each of us will remember and perform our obligations under the foregoing covenant and qualify for the blessing promised in the following declaration:

"Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul"—this is said of all of us here tonight—that every soul "who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

### Truthfulness of the Gospel

Now, my brethren, I want to leave

with you my witness. I know that God lives, and I am striving with all my soul to know God himself. I do not remember the time when I had any question about the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know as I live that Jesus lives, that he was and is the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, and that he is our Redeemer.

I know that Joseph Smith opened this last dispensation. It is thrilling to me to contemplate the fact that the Father and the Son stood before Joseph in the grove and that the Father gave the Prophet a personal introduction to his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. I know that angels came and restored the priesthood to the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery; that God did establish again his church upon the earth; that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is his church; that Jesus Christ is the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved; that acceptance and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which we have the honor to preach and are commissioned to carry to all the ends of the earth, is the only means of salvation for this world, both temporally and spiritually.

I shall not know these things better in the not-too-distant future when I shall stand before the Lord to give an

account of my work in mortality. As I bear you this testimony I pray that we shall all *fully* live the gospel and thereby qualify as true disciples of Christ, to obtain the promised peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. This I do in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Spencer W. Kimball**

President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing, "Let Us All Press On."

After the singing, we shall be pleased to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

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The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Let Us All Press On."

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### **President Kimball**

We shall now be pleased to listen to President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

## **President N. Eldon Tanner**

This is a glorious sight, indeed, brethren, to see this great body of the priesthood here in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and it is most encouraging to know that other thousands are listening to these proceedings by closed-circuit broadcast in nearly 1,500 other buildings throughout the world.

We are all gathered to be directed by the President of the Church, a prophet of God, and other speakers from whom we have heard this evening.

We all know that the priesthood is the power of God delegated to man to act in His name in the office which he holds. No greater blessing can be given to a man than to have a testimony of the gospel and to hold the priesthood of God.

I think of this vast body of priesthood holders, all engaged in the work of the Lord, trying to promote the cause of truth and righteousness and build the kingdom of God; and we each have an individual responsibility to help do this.

We all know that this is the church of Jesus Christ, and that he directs the work of this church through the prophet of God, even Spencer W. Kimball. I hope we do all know that.

Think what it means to know that this church is the only church which has the priesthood of God—the Aaronic Priesthood, which is so important that John the Baptist himself was sent to bestow this priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver; and the Melchizedek Priesthood, which was conferred upon Joseph and Oliver by Peter, James, and John by the laying on of hands.

What a tremendous thing to think about as we contemplate the power and authority and the various functions of the offices of these two priesthoods. The Aaronic Priesthood can administer the sacrament and pass it to the members of the Church and perform other duties as assigned by the bishop. The priests can actually baptize people in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; and it is so important that each and every one participating in such ordinances be clean and worthy to justify the confidence placed in them by the Lord.

### Worthiness

Brethren, I wonder if we take this priesthood too much for granted, or whether we really appreciate and thank the Lord for the confidence he has in us and the privilege we have of officiating in the ordinances of the gospel.

We cannot overemphasize the necessity of our being worthy of the responsibilities given to us.

I pray every night and every morning that our leader, President Kimball, will be blessed with the health and strength, with knowledge and understanding, and with the inspiration and revelation necessary to lead the Church as the Lord would have it done.

I pray that all of us as General Authorities will be led and directed by the Lord as we magnify our callings; that we may all speak with one voice and

live worthy of the offices which we hold; and that all priesthood holders and all the members of the Church throughout the world will so live as to be examples and influences for good among those with whom they associate, that the world may see our good works and become interested in the gospel, which is the plan of life and salvation to all who believe and live its teachings.

The whole purpose of our mission here upon the earth is to prove ourselves and help others be worthy and prepared to go back into the presence of our Heavenly Father.

In order to do this we must live according to the teachings of the gospel, and the Lord has provided the agencies through which we can work to accomplish this purpose.

We have the family, and I would like to refer for just a moment to my own family. I was fortunate enough to have my father as my bishop all the time I was in the Aaronic Priesthood. When he was interviewing me, I didn't know if he was interviewing me as a father or as a bishop, but he interviewed me, and he told me how important the priesthood was and what was necessary for me to do to be worthy of that priesthood. He was the best friend I had, and I think every bishop should be the best friend a boy has outside of his family. He should know that the bishop is trying to help him to live worthy and prepare himself for the great blessings promised by the Lord to those who will keep the covenants and live according to the teachings of the gospel. It's wonderful to live in a home where the father is exemplary, where the influence is good, where regular family home evenings are held.

The auxiliary organizations, the sacrament meeting, and the priesthood quorums, all are so designed as to encourage us and help us to prepare ourselves.

They emphasize the importance of keeping the Word of Wisdom strictly, paying our tithing, attending our meetings, being honest, honorable, and up-

right in our dealings, dependable, and refraining from the use of drugs, swearing, telling dirty stories, homosexuality, and other evil and immoral practices, all of which are displeasing in the sight of the Lord and deprive us of such important blessings as advancement in the priesthood, going to the temple, and going on missions.

I am sure that no member of the Church holding the priesthood would want to do anything that would hold back the work of the Lord.

If he is with others who hold the priesthood or are not even members of the Church, his actions and his thoughts and influence should always be the very best so they can look to him as one who is helping to build the kingdom of God and save souls, one who holds the priesthood of God. That's our responsibility, boys, wherever we are. They expect us to live as we are taught and be exemplary.

The responsibility of a bishop or stake president is to help teach, train, encourage, and strengthen those over whom they preside to live and do these things to which I have referred.

A young man has the responsibility of so living as to be prepared for these things.

As we work together, the bishop should be the best friend a boy or man has outside of his home and, naturally, an example to us in every way, but the bishop and stake president have the responsibility of determining by interview whether a man is worthy for advancement in the priesthood, worthy to fill a mission, or worthy to go to the temple.

He will determine this by observation of the way we are living and keeping the commandments and through searching interviews, realizing that it is better not to go to the temple or to go on a mission if we are not worthy, and until we are worthy.

We have had young men and young women go to the temple unworthily, who, after suffering with a guilty conscience for some years, have come to the President of the Church, confessing

and wanting to know what their position is.

We have also had young men go out into the mission field unworthily, who lied to the bishop and stake president to get there. It is certainly not right and is most displeasing in the sight of the Lord. It is better to wait or not to go than to go unworthily.

We know there is great evil in the world and great temptation, and it is important that we resist all temptation rather than trifle with it for the sake of being popular.

### Responsible for proper interviews

With all this evil present in the world today, it is most important that those who are responsible conduct proper interviews.

Let us always remember that our main purpose, assignment, and responsibility is to save souls.

It is important that those we interview realize that they are *spirit children of God* and that *we love them*, and *let them know that we love them* and are interested in their welfare and in helping them succeed in life.

It is a great responsibility for a bishop or a stake president to conduct a worthiness interview. There is equal responsibility, however, upon the member who is interviewed. Careful, searching interviews need to be conducted always individually and privately.

When you interview a young man for a mission, determine through discussion with him what the Lord would want as an ambassador to represent him and his church. Let him explain, for instance, what the Lord would want in a missionary with regard to the Word of Wisdom, with regard to morality, honesty, dependability, tithing, obedience, devotion, etc.

Tell the young man that you are interviewing him on behalf of the Lord. The statements he makes will be commitments to the Lord.

Let him interview himself along with you. Would the Lord want him as

a representative? Does he measure up in every way? Remind him that the Lord knows, and the Lord will not be mocked.

Let him know that if there is something amiss in his life, there are ways to straighten it out. There is a great cleansing power of repentance.

He should know that it is much better to postpone a mission for a period than to go unworthily. In almost every case he can repent and prepare himself for a mission.

When there has been serious transgression, he must be referred to a General Authority for clearance, but not until both the bishop and the stake president, in searching interviews, are thoroughly satisfied that he has fully repented and is now completely worthy.

You must know also that an appointment is not to be made until the stake president has discussed the case with the General Authority to determine whether or not he feels it is time to conduct the interview.

If a young man has made a mistake, he should see his friend, the bishop, on his own, without waiting to be interviewed.

It is a time to rejoice when a young man who has made mistakes clears his life and can start anew, clean and worthy to be an ambassador for the Lord.

Remember, the interview is based on consideration, on sympathy and love. This is so important. Let the people know we love them and are only trying to help them.

You bishops and stake presidents might approach an interview for a temple recommend something like this:

"You have come to me for a recommend to enter the temple. I have the responsibility of representing the Lord in interviewing you. At the conclusion of the interview there is provision for me to sign your recommend; but mine is not the only important signature on your recommend. Before the recommend is valid, you must sign it yourself.

"When you sign your recommend, you make a commitment to the Lord

that you are worthy of the privileges granted to those who hold such a recommend. There are several standard questions that I will ask [because you are instructed to do that]. You are to respond honestly to each one."

An associate of mine mentioned that some years ago, when he held a position in his ward, he went to the bishop for a temple recommend.

The bishop was busy and said, "Now, I know you every well, and I will not have to ask you the questions before signing your recommend."

This member responded: "Bishop, don't you have the responsibility to ask those questions? It is my privilege to answer them. I need to answer those questions to you and to the Lord and would appreciate your putting each question to me."

And so it is. The Lord gives the privilege to members of the Church to respond to those questions in such interviews. Then if there is something amiss, the member can get his life in order so that he may qualify for the priesthood advancement, for a mission, or for a temple recommend.

Now, after you have put those required questions to the applicant, you may wish to add something like this: "One who goes into the house of the Lord must be free from any *unclean, unholy, impure, or unnatural practice.*"

### **Avoid degrading practices**

Brethren, we who lead the Church are responsible to see that you are taught in plainness. I, therefore, must make reference to a matter that otherwise I would not present in a meeting such as this.

There are evil and degrading practices which, in the world, are not only condoned but encouraged. Sometimes married couples in their intimate expression of love to one another are drawn into practices that are unholy, unworthy, and unnatural. We receive letters from time to time asking for a definition of "unnatural" or "un-



worthy." Brethren, you know the answer to that. If in doubt at all, do not do it.

Surely no holder of the priesthood would feel worthy to accept advancement in the priesthood or sign his temple recommend if any impure practice were a part of his life.

If, perchance, one of you has been drawn into any degrading conduct, cast it away from you so that when you are subject to a worthiness interview you can answer to yourself, and to the Lord, and to the interviewing priesthood officer that you are worthy.

Remember, you who conduct worthiness interviews are representatives of the Lord and you must conduct the interviews as the Lord himself would conduct them.

That is, there must be nothing immodest or degrading in your interview. Our interviews are not to be indelicate, or offensive, or pornographic in any way.

May I say here that occasionally we receive reports that a bishop or a stake president has been very indiscreet or indelicate in an interview, especially of married members.

It is not in order for a priesthood leader to list in detail ugly, deviant, or bestial practices and then cross-examine a member of the Church as to whether or not such things are practiced.

One of the General Authorities once interviewed a young man who had gone into the mission home who had made confession of a transgression which disqualified him from missionary service.

The General Authority was amazed at the sordid nature of what the young man had done and asked, "Where on earth did you get the idea to do things like this?" He was shocked when the young man answered, "From my bishop."

During a preliminary interview for the young man's mission, the bishop had said, "Have you ever done this? Have you ever done that?" describing every unworthy and depraved act he

could think of. Such things had never before entered the young man's mind, but they were in his mind now! The adversary put in his way the opportunity and the temptation—and he fell!

### **Conduct interviews in love, modesty**

Brethren, our interviews must be conducted in love, in modesty. Oftimes things can be corrected if you ask: "Would there be a reason you may feel uncomfortable or perhaps even dishonest to the Lord if you were to sign your own temple recommend?"

"Would you like a little time to get some very personal things in order before you sign it? Remember, the Lord knows all things and will not be mocked. We are trying to help you. Never lie to try to obtain a call, a recommend, or a blessing from the Lord."

If you approach the matter as outlined above, the member has the responsibility to interview himself. The bishop or stake president has the right to the power of discernment. He will know whether or not there is something amiss that ought to be settled before a recommend is issued.

How blessed we are to have the gift of discernment available to us as officers in the priesthood!

On occasion a bishop or a stake president will receive a confession from a member of the Church concerning a transgression that took place many, many years ago. That individual should have made confession long since but did not and, therefore, has suffered unnecessarily.

It is not always necessary to conduct a court in such cases. That is up to the bishop. You are entitled to inspiration and guidance, particularly if the individual has demonstrated through his conduct over the years that that mistake is not characteristic of his life.

### **Blessing of discernment**

How marvelous that inspiration

and revelation may accompany us in our duties! Brethren, be worthy of that.

We frequently hear accounts of how bishops and stake presidents, motivated by consideration and love, have been inspired in conducting interviews and have been able, where problems were present, to help members of the Church correct their course in life so that they became completely worthy to fulfill missions, to be advanced in the priesthood, or to enter the house of the Lord. And that's what we are trying to do—help these young men, through love and understanding and interest, to do those things which are necessary in their lives for them to enjoy the blessings of the faithful.

Again I say, what a blessing that we have discernment and revelation and inspiration to guide us in our main purpose, which is to save souls, yes, even our own, and to help prepare our members to understand the purpose of their mission here upon the earth, and to prepare themselves to go back into the presence of our Heavenly Father!

Now, brethren, we are about to hear from our beloved president, Spencer W. Kimball, a prophet of God through whom the Lord himself directs this church. May we all listen, believe, and follow him, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## President Spencer W. Kimball

It is a great joy to greet the priesthood of the Church this glorious night. All over the world we gather to worship the Lord and give him praise.

### Honor womanhood

My brothers in the priesthood, it was a great thrill recently to have tens of thousands of the sisters of the Church assemble in hundreds of places around the world in a special meeting for the women of the Church. You will have had your own reports from your wives and sisters, mothers, and daughters about the meeting. We feel gratified that we were able to hold the meeting and that technology made it possible. We love the women of the Church! We have great respect for them.

In following up on that event, I want to counsel you as sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands. As you serve with the women of the Church, follow what Paul said when he urged Timothy to "intreat . . . the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all

purity" (1 Tim. 5:1-2). We men of the priesthood ought to so do. We must be different than other men, and I am sure most priesthood holders are. Paul's suggestion that we treat older women as if they were our mothers and younger women as if they were our sisters and to do so with "all purity" is excellent instruction. Men of the world may disregard women or see them only as objects of desire or as someone to be used for selfish purposes. Let us, however, be different in our conduct and in our relationships with women.

Peter urged us to give honor unto our wives. (See 1 Pet. 3:7.) It seems to me we should be even more courteous to our wives and mothers, our sisters and our daughters, than we are to others. When Paul said that a man who did not *provide* for his own and those of his own household was "worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8), I like to think of providing for our own as including providing them with affectional security as well as economic security. When the Lord told us in this dispensation that

"women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance" (D&C 83:2), I like to think of *maintenance* as including our obligation to maintain loving affection and to provide consideration and thoughtfulness as well as food.

President Lee once observed that the "needy" around us may need friendship and fellowship as well as food. I sometimes think our own Latter-day Saint women are "needy" just because some of us are not as thoughtful and considerate of them as we should be. Our pantries can be filled with food and yet our sisters can be starved for affection and recognition.

Let us, brethren, support the sisters of our household in their Church callings as they so wonderfully support us. Let us not neglect them simply because they sometimes go on being good even when they are neglected.

Let our homes be filled with praise and commendation for all those of our household. Let us also, brethren, not get so concerned with our priesthood peers, those men we are associated with in our church assignments, that we neglect our eternal companions, for our association with our wives will be forever.

### Respect life

Our Father in Heaven was gracious enough to give to us for our pleasure and convenience all life on earth. Let me read to you from his personal statement:

"And God said Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

"And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given

every green herb for meat: and it was so.

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Gen. 1:20, 29-31.)

I read at the priesthood meeting at the last conference the words to the verse of the song years ago, "Don't Kill the Little Birds," with which I was familiar when I was a child growing up in Arizona. I found many young boys around my age who, with their flippers and their slings, destroyed many birds.

In Primary and Sunday School we sang the song:

*Don't kill the little birds  
That sing on bush and tree,  
All thro' the summer days,  
Their sweetest melody."  
(Deseret Song, 1909, no. 163.)*

As I was talking to the young men at that time all over the world, I felt that I should say something more along this line.

I suppose in every country in the world there are beautiful little birds with their beautiful plumage and their attractive songs.

I remember that my predecessor, President Joseph Fielding Smith, was a protector of these feathered and other wild life creatures.

While President Smith at one time was in the Wasatch Mountain Area, he befriended the creatures from the hill and forest. He composed four little verses as follows, and opposite each he drew a little picture. Of the mountain squirrel first, he wrote:

*This is little Chopper Squirrel  
Up in the mountains high.  
He begs us for some grains of corn,  
With thanks he says goodbye.*

And then the bat was next:

*This is little Tommy Bat  
Who flies around at night.  
He eats the bugs and 'skeeters' too,  
Which is a thing quite right.*

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Then he came to the deer:

*This is little Bambi Deer  
Who comes to the cabin homes.  
She licks the salt we feed her,  
And on the mountain roams.*

And then the birds:

*This, our little feathered friend  
Who sings for us all day.  
When comes the winter and the cold,  
He wisely flies away."*

Now, I also would like to add some of my feelings concerning the unnecessary shedding of blood and destruction of life. I think that every soul should be impressed by the sentiments that have been expressed here by the prophets.

And not less with reference to the killing of innocent birds is the wildlife of our country that live upon the vermin that are indeed enemies to the farmer and to mankind. It is not only wicked to destroy them, it is a shame, in my opinion. I think that this principle should extend not only to the bird life but to the life of all animals. For that purpose I read the scripture where the Lord gave us all the animals. Seemingly, he thought it was important that all these animals be on the earth for our use and encouragement.

### Joseph F. Smith's love of wildlife

President Joseph F. Smith said, "When I visited, a few years ago, the Yellowstone National Park, and saw in the streams and the beautiful lakes, birds swimming quite fearless of man, allowing passers-by to approach them as closely almost as tame birds, and apprehending no fear of them, and when I saw droves of beautiful deer[feeding] along the side of the road, as fearless of the presence of men as any domestic animal, it filled my heart with a degree of peace and joy that seemed to be almost a foretaste of that period hoped for when there shall be none to hurt and

none to molest in all the land, especially among all the inhabitants of Zion. These same birds, if they were to visit other regions, inhabited by man, would, on account of their tameness, doubtless become more easily a prey to the gunner. The same may be said of those beautiful creatures—the deer and the antelope. If they should wander out of the park, beyond the protection that is established there for these animals, they would become, of course, an easy prey to those who were seeking their lives. I never could see why a man should be imbued with a blood-thirsty desire to kill and destroy animal life. I have known men—and they still exist among us—who enjoy what is, to them, the 'sport' of hunting birds and slaying them by the hundreds, and who will come in after a day's sport, boasting of how many harmless birds they have had the skill to slaughter, and day after day, during the season when it is lawful for men to hunt and kill (the birds having had a season of protection and not apprehending danger) go out by scores or hundreds, and you may hear their guns early in the morning on the day of the opening, as if great armies had met in battle; and the terrible work of slaughtering the innocent birds goes on.

"I do not believe any man should kill animals or birds unless he needs them for food, and then he should not kill innocent little birds that are not intended for food for man. I think it is wicked for men to thirst in their souls to kill almost everything which possesses animal life. It is wrong, and I have been surprised at prominent men whom I have seen whose very souls seemed to be athirst for the shedding of animal blood." (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed., Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 1939, pp. 265-66.)

One of the poets stated in this connection:

*Take not away the life you cannot give,  
For all things have an equal right to live.*

—and I might add there also, because

God gave it to them, and they were to be used only, as I understand, for food and to supply the needs of men.

It is quite a different matter when a pioneer crossing the plains would kill a buffalo to bring food to his children and his family. There were also those vicious men who would kill buffalo only for their tongues and skins, permitting the life to be sacrificed and the food also to be wasted.

When asked how he governed so many people, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."

We look to the Prophet Joseph Smith for proper teaching. He said once: "We crossed the Embarras river and encamped on a small branch of the same about one mile west. In pitching my tent we found three massasaugas or prairie rattlesnakes, which the brethren were about to kill, but I said, 'Let them alone—don't hurt them! How will the serpent ever lose his venom, while the servants of God possess the same disposition and continue to make war upon it? Men must become harmless, before the brute creation; and when men lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race, the lion and the lamb can dwell together, and the sucking child can play with the serpent in safety.' The brethren took the serpents carefully on sticks and carried them across the creek. I exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve ourselves from hunger." (*History of the Church*, 2:71-72.)

### Virtuous living

Now, my brethren young and old, there is another matter I wish to mention. I wish to read for you a verse for your serious thought. The verse is called "Keeping Clean" and is in somewhat the same area as the other Brethren have talked about.

*When you tell a filthy story,*

*Do you ever stop to think  
What impression you have made upon  
the crowd?*

*Do you think the boys enjoy it?  
Do you think because they laugh  
That you have sufficient reason to be  
proud?*

*Do you know that you exhibit  
All that is within your soul,  
When the filthy story passes from your  
tongue?*

*It reveals your own defilement,  
It proclaims your ignorance,  
It disgusts all decent boys who love real  
fun.*

*Do you think that you exhibit any real  
common sense,  
When you show the crowd how rotten is  
you mind?*

*Do you know that you dishonor  
Both your parents and your friends?  
Think it over, boys, and that is what  
you'll find.*

*Be a little choice in language;  
Be a little more refined,  
If respect of those around you you would  
win,  
You will have a great advantage over  
those who are inclined  
To go through life in filth, and slime and  
sin.*

Brethren, let us think about these things. Ponder them in your heart. Live worthily, keep the commandments, honor your priesthood and the Lord will love and bless you; and as his servant, I leave my love and blessing with you.

### Pray for missionary work

I want to mention one other matter before closing, and that is, we've been talking about the great missionary program which Brother LeGrand Richards mentioned in the first of the meeting. We now have some 26,606 missionaries. Every week the number is increasing.

There are many nations where we

have not been able to get in, to get visas, or get passports; and it is very important. If we are to fulfill the responsibility given to us by the Lord on the Mount of Olives to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, then we will need to open the doors to these nations. I mentioned this the other day to the brethren in the Regional Representatives meeting. We've hardly scratched the surface. We need far more missionaries, and we need more countries that will think of us as being their friends and will give us an opportunity to come into their nations and give to their people the finest thing in the world—the gospel of Christ—which can be their salvation and their great happiness.

I'm hoping that every man and boy listening to me this night will make it a solemn practice in regular life to pray constantly for this great blessing to bless the brethren who are making a special effort to reach the leaders of these nations and to convince them that we have only good for their people. We will make them good citizens, we will make them good souls, and we will make them happy and joyous.

I hope that every family will hold home evening every Monday night without fail. Missionary work will be one of the strong points that will be brought before it; and the father and the mother and the children in their turns will offer prayers which will be centered around this very important element—that the doors of the nations might be opened to us and then, secondly, that the missionaries, the young men and women of the Church, may be anxious to fill those missions and bring people into the Church.

In China we have nine-hundred million people. Yesterday about fifty Chinese Saints came in to see me. I took them through the Church offices and told them about our programs, and then I said to them, "We have been talking about China today." (That was the day of the Regional Representatives meeting.) "We've learned of that people's

good qualities and that the Spirit of the Lord seems to be brooding over them, to bring the possibility of the gospel to them." I asked all of those Chinese people who were here at conference, "Will you guarantee that in all your home evenings and in all your family prayers and in all your public prayers you will mention this to the Lord? Now, I know he can do it without our help; but I think he would want to know that we were interested in it and that we would appreciate it greatly."

So I'm hoping that, beginning now, the prayers of the Saints will be greatly increased from what they have been in the past, that we will never think of praying except we pray for the Lord to establish his program and make it possible that we can carry the gospel to his people as he has commanded. It is my deep interest and great prayer to you that this will be accomplished.

And now in closing, I wish to express appreciation for all that has been said by these beloved brethren who have spoken. I bear my testimony to the truth of the gospel and to the greatness of it, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Spencer W. Kimball**

Sessions of the Conference tomorrow will be broadcast to a large audience in many parts of the United States and Canada over the many television and radio stations cooperating to provide extensive coverage of this Conference.

Many radio stations will broadcast conference tomorrow morning, Sunday, in major cities of Mexico and Central America, and by Satellite transmission in Australia and countries of South America.

The nationwide CBS radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

In leaving this priesthood meeting tonight, we remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the combined men of the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus. We are grateful to you brethren for your beautiful and expressive music and express sincere thanks for the service you have rendered here tonight.

The Choir will close this meeting with, "The Lord is My Shepherd," following which Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Aus-

tralia-New Zealand Area, will offer the benediction.

This conference will then be adjourned until 10:00 A.M. tomorrow.

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The Choir sang, "The Lord is My Shepherd."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the benediction.

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## SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

### FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1978, with President Spencer W. Kimball presiding and conducting.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the beginning of the session, the Choir sang the hymn, "God of Our Fathers," without announcement.

President Kimball then made the following remarks:

#### President Spencer W. Kimball

We welcome all who are present this morning in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in the fourth session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also acknowledge those who are seated in the overflow congregations in the Assembly Hall and Salt Palace and those tuned to this Conference by radio and television.

Elders Robert L. Simpson and George P. Lee preside in the Assembly

Hall, and Elders Gene R. Cook and William R. Bradford preside in the Salt Palace.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this Conference.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The Choir opened these services by singing, "God of Our Fathers," and will now sing, "More Things Are Wrought by Prayer," following which Elder Marion D. Hanks, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

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The Choir sang, "More Things Are Wrought By Prayer."

Elder Marion D. Hanks offered the invocation.

Following the prayer, the Choir sang the hymn, "Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love" without announcement.

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**President Spencer W. Kimball**

The Tabernacle Choir has sung, "Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

**President N. Eldon Tanner**

The choir sang so beautifully "God of Our Fathers" at the beginning of the meeting, and the prayer was addressed to "Our Father who art in heaven." Then the choir sang the song "Tis Sweet to Sing the Matchless Love," referring to Christ. This morning I should like to talk about God and his relationship to man. I humbly pray that the Spirit and blessings of the Lord will be with us as I speak to you.

**The existence of God**

A simple opening statement in the Bible is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1); and therein is to be found the basis for man's belief in God, his omnipotence, his love, and the reason for man's existence in this mortal state.

As we read on in that first chapter of Genesis, we learn of the great organization of this earth—the division of light from darkness, the earth from the heavens; the bringing forth of grass, the herb yielding seed, and fruit; the appearance of the sun, moon, and stars; the creation of fish, fowl, and animals. And finally "God created man in his own image . . . male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:1-27).

Beyond reading these and other scriptural evidences of the existence of God, how well do we really know God, our Creator, and how well do we really understand his personality, characteristics, and attributes? Belief in the fact that God exists is of first importance, but it is not *all* that is necessary in order to exercise an intelligent faith that will lead us back into his presence for eternal life with him.

**Character of God**

In addition to a belief in the existence of God, we must know something of his character and attributes or our faith will be imperfect and unfruitful. Faith will avail us nothing unless it is based on true principles. This is illustrated in a story I have told before about the meeting of the the Indians with the Europeans when they first began their explorations in the New World. The Indians were amazed at the power and explosive qualities of gunpowder and asked many questions about how it was produced. Taking advantage of the ignorance of the savages and seeing an opportunity to increase their wealth through deception, the Europeans told them it came from the seed of a plant. The Indians believed them and purchased some seed in exchange for gold. They carefully planted the seed and watched it grow, but of course they did not get any gunpowder. No matter how sincere one's belief may be in an error, it will not change the error into truth.

So it is with our belief in God. Unless we know him and understand his nature and character, we cannot have perfect faith in him. There was no question about God in Old Testament times. He walked and talked with Adam and Eve, and even after their transgression they continued to call upon him and to sacrifice to him. He gave them commandments which they obeyed.

Cain and Abel learned of God from the teachings of their parents, as well as from personal revelations. After the acceptance of Abel's offering and the rejection of that of Cain, followed



by Cain's crime of fratricide, God talked with Cain and Cain answered.

Adam lived for nine hundred and thirty years, during which time he could give personal testimony to eight generations of his descendants, down to Lemech, the father of Noah. (See Gen. 5:5-31.) Through Noah and his family, a knowledge of God by direct tradition was carried beyond the Flood; moreover, Noah held direct communication with God and lived to instruct ten generations of his descendants. (See Gen. 6:9.) There followed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (or Israel), and among the children of Israel, God wrought great wonders. (See Gen. 17:1; Exod. 3:15.)

He made himself known by various means of communication to Moses, who even beheld the "similitude" of God (see Num. 12:8); and this account of direct communication has been preserved by Israel through all generations.

### Evidence of God's existence

In addition to history and tradition, human reason declares the existence of God. We find this confirmed in nature all around us. I quote from Elder James E. Talmage, a noted scientist of his day:

"The observer is impressed by the manifest order and system in creation; he notes the regular succession of day and night providing alternate periods of work and rest for man, animals, and plants; the sequence of the seasons, each with its longer periods of activity and recuperation; the mutual dependence of animals and plants; the circulation of water from sea to cloud, from cloud to earth again, with beneficent effect. As man proceeds to the closer examination of things he finds that by study and scientific investigation these proofs are multiplied many fold. He may learn of the laws by which the earth and its associated worlds are governed in their orbits; by which satellites are held subordinate to planets, and planets to suns; he may behold the marvels of vegetable and animal anatomy, and the surpassing mechanism of his

own body; and with such appeals to his reason increasing at every step, his wonder as to who ordained all this gives place to adoration for the Creator whose presence and power are thus so forcefully proclaimed; and the observer becomes a worshiper." (*The Articles of Faith*, 42nd ed., Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961, pp. 32-33.)

With all this evidence it is hard to understand how some can doubt the very existence of God. The early scriptures do not attempt to demonstrate God's existence or to argue on the sophistries of atheism, so it seems that the errors of doubt crept in at some later time. With the death of Christ and the apostles, and during the period of apostasy when revelation ceased, the simple, consistent, and authentic doctrine about the character and attributes of God became distorted, and numerous theories and dogmas of men appeared, many of which are utterly mystical and incomprehensible.

### Philosophies of men

Seeking to end the many disagreements and arguments regarding the Godhead which were prevalent at the time, the emperor Constantine in the year A.D. 325 convened the Council of Nice in order that this body might make "a declaration of... belief that would be received as authoritative." This council brought forth what is known as the Nicene Creed, followed some time later by the Athanasian Creed which reads in part:

"We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God." (Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, pp. 47-48.)

Elder Talmage said, "It would be difficult to conceive of a greater number of inconsistencies and contradictions expressed in words as few" (*Articles of Faith*, p. 48). And to many, God is just such a mystery, and as incomprehensible.

### Revelation

In these latter days God again has revealed himself to man as he did in former times. Biblical prophecies predict a falling away from the true gospel, or an apostasy, and also a restoration, including the manner in which it should come. This great event did actually occur when the Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who in his generation could and did testify that they were two separate beings and that one said, pointing to the other, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

When he reported his vision, the doubters scoffed, ridiculed, and persecuted him and he said he felt much like Paul when he made his defense before King Agrippa (See Joseph Smith 2:21-24).

"He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise."

Joseph said:

"So it was with me. . . I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for

telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation." (Joseph Smith 2:25.)

Later, through heavenly messengers, Joseph Smith was instructed regarding the reestablishment of the Church of Jesus Christ with the same organization that existed in the primitive church which Christ organized while he was upon the earth, with apostles, prophets, etc. As predicted by ancient prophets, other scriptures came forth, new revelation was given, and the restoration of the gospel was heralded by all who had been waiting for the fulfillment of prophecy.

### True nature of the Godhead

Soon after the organization of the Church in 1830, Joseph Smith prepared thirteen statements which became known as the Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The first one reads as follows:

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost."

Through revelation and the scriptures we know that these three are separate individuals, physically distinct from each other. It is recorded that when the Savior was baptized, John recognized the sign of the Holy Ghost, he saw Jesus in the flesh, and he heard the voice of the Father. Each personage of the Godhead manifested himself separately (see Matt. 3:13-17). Later, the Savior separately defined the three members of the Godhead when he told his disciples that when he left them, the Father would send a comforter, who is the Holy Ghost (see John 14:26).

Each member of this trinity is called God, and together they constitute the Godhead. As indicated, they are

three separate beings, but they are one in purpose, and Jesus repeatedly testified of the unity existing among the three.

To those who question or do not understand, let me assure you that every human soul can receive this personal testimony. God may not come in person, as he did to Joseph Smith and others; but through the power of the Holy Ghost, by which all truth is discerned, every person can gain a knowledge for himself that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father, and that he came and dwelt among men to give them the plan of life and salvation.

Recently I was reading from a talk given in September 1919 by President Heber J. Grant, the seventh president of the Church. He told of reading a book entitled *The Young Man and the World*, written by Senator Albert J. Beveridge. In one chapter called "The Young Man and the Pulpit," Mr. Beveridge said, according to President Grant, that "any man who enters the pulpit to preach, if he is not converted in his heart of hearts to the truth of that which he preaches, commits a sacrilege every time he stands up in his pulpit."

Then Mr. Beveridge said: "A certain man, with good opportunities for getting correct answers, during an entire summer vacation asked three questions of all the ministers with whom he came in contact. The first question was: 'Do you believe in God, the Father—God, a person—God, a definite and tangible intelligence—not a congeries of laws floating like a fog through the universe—but God, a person in whose image you were made? Don't argue; don't explain; but is your mind in a condition where you can answer yes or no?' Not a minister answered 'Yes.' . . .

The next question in Senator Beveridge's book was: "'Yes or no, do you believe that Christ was the Son of the Living God, sent by Him to save the World. . . , that Christ was God's very Son, with a divinely appointed and definite mission, dying on the cross and raised from the dead—yes or no?' Not a

minister answered 'Yes.'"

The third question was: "'Do you believe that when you die you will live again as a conscious intelligence, knowing who you are and who other people are? Answer yes or no.' Not one answered 'Yes.'"

President Grant went on to explain, as we are able to do today, that every Latter-day Saint—man, woman, and child—who has studied the scriptures and who has a desire to know God and his plan of life and salvation could answer "Yes" to all three questions. (In Conference Report, Oct. 1919, pp. 27-28.)

We know that we had a pre-existence, that we are here in mortality to prove ourselves worthy to go back into the presence of our Heavenly Father and there enjoy eternal life.

### Atonement for all

This brings us to another article of our faith which declares:

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" (Articles of Faith 3).

This declaration is clarified in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith as recorded in the seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

"That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness." (D&C 76:40-41.)

The Atonement and redemption was taught by Paul, who said, in writing to the Corinthians:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:19-22.)

Christ said:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18.)

On another occasion he said:

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:26-29.)

We recall the words of Jesus to Martha when she told him of her brother's death:

"I am the resurrection, and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25-26.)

In a glorious promise, beautifully expressed, the Savior declared:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17.)

From these scriptures we can plainly see the importance of our understanding just what the Atonement is and our responsibility in relation to it.

We learn that the Atonement is for *all*—that *all* will be resurrected from the grave. We will experience the resurrection of life or of damnation. It is clearly stated that we must believe in Jesus Christ, follow him, and keep his commandments.

There may be some who feel so burdened with guilt over transgressions of the past that they have lost hope; and there may be some who feel the time is too far spent for them to change the course of their lives. To everyone the gospel plan gives encouragement and hope for a glorious resurrection and eternal life with God through the principle of repentance. The Savior's plea throughout his ministry was "Repent, and be baptized, and come unto me." Repentance embodies a recognition of one's sins, a confession, and a forsaking. The rewards for accepting and living the teachings of Jesus Christ will far exceed the riches of the earth, as we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

### Solemn testimony

As a special witness for Christ, I bear my solemn testimony that God lives; that we are his spirit children; that Jesus Christ is his Only Begotten Son in the flesh, and is the Savior of us all; that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); and that through the Atonement of Christ all mankind can enjoy eternal life by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

I bear further witness that the gospel in its fulness has been restored in these the latter days; that this church, under the direction of Jesus Christ, is led by a prophet of God, even Spencer W. Kimball. May we all accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and so live as to enjoy eternal life with God, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from President

N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

The Choir will now sing, "I Believe in Christ," following which Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will address us.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang the anthem, "I Believe in Christ."

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### President Kimball

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Today in many places of the world it is harvest time. Crops are being gathered for the use and benefit of all mankind. Besides being an appropriate time for all of us to give thanks, harvest time should be a time of personal contemplation, evaluation, and planning. In farming or in just plain living, what contributes to a successful harvest? What can we do to ensure better crops and production? On the other hand, what could cause us to forfeit the harvest?

### "Who will forfeit the harvest?"

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, by use of the parable of the sower, the Savior points out conditions that cause crop failure. He answers the question, "Who will forfeit the harvest?" His warnings and observations are worthy. The same stony places are with us now; and unless we are mindful, our personal harvest can be lost.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

"And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

"And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no

root, they withered away.

"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matt. 13:3-6, 23.)

The promise of the harvest is there for those who receive the seed unto good ground and establish roots that are strong.

### Human qualities

Let me share with you four prevalent conditions on the horizon today that can cause us to lose the harvest.

1. *Unwillingness to accept human qualities.* When Jesus had taught with such profound wisdom, judgment, and skill, some of those closest to him were astonished by his amazing abilities and miracles, and said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?"

"Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? . . .

"are they not all with us?" (Matt. 13:54-56; italics added.) They were mightily impressed, even astonished, at his words and works, but had difficulty accepting the source. "Is not this the carpenter's son? . . . are they not all with us?"

Today some are sowing seeds on stony places because they, too, doubt

the authority of those who give counsel and direction. There is a tendency on the part of some to ignore, criticize, or rebel because they cannot accept the *human delivery system*. Some will not accept Jesus Christ as the Savior because they are waiting for a Prince of Peace to come who is not quite as human as Jesus of Nazareth. Questions such as, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" "Is not this the one born in a manger?" "Can any good . . . come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46) are evidences of the weakness of men who are unwilling to accept the human qualities of those who are called and raised up to give direction and counsel.

We, too, should not be deceived by doubters who would use the same tactics by planting thorns to destroy the harvest. How can we avoid crop failure in this area of concern? By not allowing our roots to be withered away by winds and storms of: "Is not this the one who was raised in Arizona?" "Is not this the one who came from Canada?" "Is not this the one who was born in Mexico?" "Go to our new bishop for counsel? Is not he the one who lives just up the street?"

We read in Matthew:

"And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

"And he did *not* many mighty works there because of their unbelief." (Matt. 13:57-58; italics added.)

The concept that "a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house" was a tragedy for these Galilean people. Shortly after this time Jesus left Nazareth and the Galilean ministry to concentrate most of his efforts in the southern part of the country nearer Jerusalem. Think of what miracles, manifestations, and healings of body and soul might have been enjoyed by these people if their faith had been sufficient to accept the great works of his faith. But he left them, never really to return again.

Sadly enough, I think we see this around us now. Someone who daily

walks and talks and enjoys the presence of a Joseph Smith or a Spencer W. Kimball, but who is still essentially without faith, may have great difficulty in accepting them as prophets. I remember President Harold B. Lee telling the story of a very prominent man from New York who could not accept Joseph Smith as a prophet because he was "too close to me" ("The Place of the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," address to seminary and institute of religion faculty, Brigham Young University, 8 July 1964, p. 2).

Will we forfeit the harvest because we cannot accept direction, revelation, or counsel from someone who just lives down the street, in the ward, or in the stake? Will we reject leadership from the churchman who is human, with frailties, and who has family members who may be quite human also?

While we are struggling with an "Is-not-this-the-carpenter's-son?" attitude, we may be missing the truth, the way, and the ultimate harvest. Jesus was not accepted as the Only Begotten Son of God because thousands preferred to recognize him as "just the child of Mary."

The worth and significance of a President Joseph Fielding Smith, Brigham Young, or Joseph Smith is not measured by his physical stature, wearing apparel, or public image. Whether eternal truths were taught by one who dwelled near the Sea of Galilee or by one who lived in upstate New York, the size, origin, image, or popularity of the teachers can not detract from the value of the truths which they shared.

Safety can be assured for us if "we believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 9). May I add, these revelations will come through people—even the prophets with human qualities.

### Accepting changes necessary

#### 2. Unwillingness to accept change.

If we are unable to accept change, in the language of the parable of the sower, we are those with no root.

"Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (Matt. 13:21).

If our roots are deep, we will welcome continuing revelation, change, and direction. We will develop the ability to accept releases, callings, and new challenges with enthusiasm. We will be too busy to be offended. We will be too big to be hurt. We will serve wherever we are called with anxious dedication. We will accept people for what they are and what they can and do become. Change will not only drive our roots deeper but cause them to grow into new and fertile soil.

Some years ago a young mother of my acquaintance shared this event in her life. She had been active in youth activities in the ward for several years and was at the time president of the young women. The stake president called one day and asked her to meet with the stake presidency the following Sunday afternoon. With anxiety in her voice and tears close to the surface, she went to her husband and said, "I'm afraid they want me for a stake job. I don't want a stake job. I love the ward. I love the youth in the ward. I love my counselors. I love my job. I don't want to change."

Her husband said, "Please go and see what they want. I'll support you in any assignment."

Her fears were realized. She was asked to be stake president of the Young Women. Later, the stake president told her that after she had reluctantly accepted the call, he had never seen a more forlorn-looking person walk out of his office.

For over six years she, with the same sisters as counselors, took care of the stake work for the young women. "Those were some of the best years of service for me," she said. "My horizons expanded. I became acquainted with the wonderful leaders and great young

people in our stake. I even had leadership experiences with other fine leaders in the whole valley. Later the opportunity came to serve on a general board. I shudder to think what I would have missed if I had declined the change in assignments."

Our Father in Heaven knows what we need. Change can be difficult. Change can be fearful. But change in the right direction is a growing process. Each new assignment, each new experience in the gospel framework, if fulfilled to the best of one's ability, adds new strengths.

Resistance to and resentment of change, of new assignments, of new opportunities are stony places that may keep our roots in the gospel from going deep and growing strong.

It was Theodore I. Rubin who wisely said, "If we let it, life produces endless experiences that demand change. If you are motivated and willing to struggle, you can change and grow for *as long as you live*. This is the challenge, the pain and the joy of being human."

Sometimes we are unwise and even cruel in our unwillingness to accept change in others. I recently learned of a man who raised his family and pursued his professional life in a small country town. He was not without his problems but was a good man with a great heart who loved the Lord and the gospel. Mistakes, even small ones, are not soon forgotten in some neighborhoods, however; and he never seemed to be "allowed" to grow, blossom, develop, and change into what he could become.

As a missionary serving overseas, he had made a remarkable contribution. The mission president said he had done more to bridge the cultural gap between the two countries than any other adult American was able to do. Yet when his mission was over, he returned to the small town; and without malice or evil intent but with the insistent burden of memory, his neighbors did not invite him or let him be the man he had become, but rather seemed quite prepared to see him as the less attractive

man of an earlier period.

Because of their expectations, he completed the last years of his life much less happy and much less involved and surely much less productive to the kingdom than he had been for that one glorious period where people in a new land and in a different time allowed him to change and to be what he really wanted to be and, in his heart, really was.

Let me share one other example. A friend of mine went to school with a boy who did not have much home life and for whom the gospel did not mean as much as it later would. He drank a little and caroused a little; but later, after moving away from his home town, he became very active in the Church. His one dream was to return to his home town and start a business, which he tried to do. But unfortunately, as with the other man, the people in the community insisted on treating him as he had been, not as what he had become. He finally moved away and is doing remarkably well in business and in the Church. He recently expressed to my friend how deeply disappointed he was that his former friends and townspeople had not let him "come home," even in a gospel sense.

### Follow instructions

3. *Unwillingness to follow instructions.* These are they who may forfeit the harvest because they will not be obedient. "Hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" is the description the parable of the sower uses to describe those who fall into this vulnerable territory (Matt. 13:13).

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them" (Matt. 13:7). We, too, will fall among the thorns and be led away from our promised blessings if we fail in obedience.

I was very impressed a few days ago when I heard an eager, reactivated elder say, "I'm back in the Church and active today because my elders quorum

president came to see me when I didn't want to be seen, and loved me when I didn't want to be loved." Here is an elders quorum president obediently doing his job as it should be done.

Sometimes when we are asked to be obedient, we do not know why, except the Lord has commanded. From 1 Nephi 9:5 we read, "Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not." Nephi followed instructions even though he didn't fully understand the wise purpose. His obedience resulted in blessings to mankind all over the world. By not obeying our present-day leaders, we plant our seeds in stony places and may forfeit the harvest.

### Become totally committed

4. *Unwillingness to be totally committed.* The parable of the sower would refer to these as those who have no deepness. They are those without commitment or testimony. These are those who would be convenience members. Some testimonies spring up quickly and flourish for a while until the heat comes on or a stony place is encountered. Then the withering starts to take place.

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth" (Matt. 13:5; italics added).

Deep and enduring testimonies grow and strengthen as they are daily nurtured. They increase as they are shared. Meaningful testimonies have roots planted in fertile soil. The sun, the rain, and even the storms make them stronger and more durable. As the events of daily life come upon us, some testimonies wither under the heat of everyday occurrences. Roots are shallow, testimonies fade, and there is no harvest.

Let us seek to be totally committed. Then we will not fall upon stony places, wither away, or stray from the paths of security and happiness. Those who



serve with complete dedication wherever called do not wilt, wither, wonder, or wander. Their roots are deep and solidly planted in the fertile soils of the kingdom. The harvest is enjoyed with every passing day as they serve.

Let us not forfeit the harvest. If we forfeit the harvest, what do we lose? We lose day by day pleasures of growth and development that come from doing our tasks in the framework of the gospel. We lose the satisfaction of accomplishing difficult tasks and serving better.

Most of all, we forfeit the gift of eternal growth and progress. May we avoid the stony places of (1) unwillingness to accept human qualities, (2) unwillingness to accept change, (3) unwillingness to follow instructions, and (4) unwillingness to be totally committed. By so doing we can establish deep, strong roots and thus reap the harvest our Father in Heaven wants for all his children. For this I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Following Elder Marvin J. Ashton's remarks, the Choir sang, "Hallelu-

jah," from *Mt. of Olives*, without announcement.

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

The Choir and Congregation will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel."

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"Redeemer of Israel" was sung by the Choir and congregation.

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### President Kimball

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder Carlos E. Asay of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Carlos E. Asay

I knew of a man who never looked up; consequently, he never lived—he just existed. Over a period of years this man became a slave to alcohol. Drink by drink he accumulated all the miserable habits and characteristics of a drunkard. He walked the streets in a stupor of mind and with an unsteady step. When greeted by friends passing by, his response was a feeble wave of the hand or an almost inaudible grunt. Physically, he was a wreck.

To avoid people and conversation, this alcoholic would stagger off the path or into the gutter, for that was the direc-

tion of his look. He seemed oblivious to the people, the things, and the events around him.

Many pitied this man who had lost health, pride, purpose, family love, and other blessings. They observed his shackled condition but did little or nothing to remove or help him remove the shackles. Others, without compassion ridiculed him.

After many years of suffering, some unselfish people helped this man work a miracle. These friends invested countless hours of loving care, much kindly persuasion, many fervent prayers, and

all else required to reform the man. In the process of repentance, (1) he allowed the written word of God to nourish his impoverished soul; (2) he fixed his eyes upon a living prophet and tuned his ears to the prophet's teachings; and (3) he also rekindled faith in himself by exercising faith in Christ.

In time he gained the confidence and strength to walk with steady stride on the sidewalk. He was successful in breaking Satan's bonds. He straightened his shoulders, looked people in the eye, and began to converse with others. More important, he assumed his rightful role as a loved husband and respected father. I'm told that when this man—this new man—stood in church and bore his testimony, he expressed these thoughts:

"You'll never know how wonderful it is to recognize people by the smiles on their faces rather than the dust on their shoes."

"You'll never know how wonderful it is to gaze upward at a blue sky rather than downward at darkened ground."

"You'll never know how wonderful it is to return home from work and have your children run toward you with love, rather than away from you with fear."

### No isolated case

I have not described an isolated or bizarre case. The story which I have shared with you, without the happy ending, is common. Every day men, women, and youth around us are permitting strong drink and other forms of sin to drag them down and to bend their look. How terribly wrong and serious it is when men allow themselves to become burdened with sin and error and are rendered unable to look up and live! On the other hand, how wonderful it is:

—When men look to God through the scriptures and allow divine truths to nourish their souls.

—When men look to God through a living prophet and permit the counsel of an inspired man to guide their steps.

—When men look to Christ and place themselves in a position to claim the blessings of his atonement.

### Hear the voice of God

Some years ago I supervised a young man who was having difficulty in understanding and appreciating his church assignment. I tried very hard to point out the importance of his duties. I also appealed to his sense of honor. The conversation seemed to have little effect upon my listener. Finally, after some inner strugglings, I asked: "What will it take to convince you that you must successfully complete your calling?" He did not answer. So I added: "Are you waiting to see a burning bush? to receive an angelic visitation? or to hear a voice directly from heaven?"

His response was immediate: "That's what I need. I need to hear the voice of God."

At first I wondered if the young man was serious. However, the look on his face and the tone of his voice convinced me that he was. I then invited him to read with me this scripture: "And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it."

"These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

"For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

"Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words." (D&C 18:33-36.)

My associate began to understand that the scriptures are the will, the mind, the word, and the voice of the Lord. (See D&C 68:4.)

I encouraged the young man to look to God through the scriptures. I requested that he regard his daily study period as a personal interview with the Lord. And I made the promise that he would find purpose and enthusiasm for

his calling—if he was faithful in his reading and pondering of the scriptures.

### Words of Christ—a compass

In the Book of Mormon we read of a people who had an instrument called a ball or director. This compasslike instrument was prepared by the Lord and worked according to the people's faith in God. When they were righteous and exercised faith, the spindles would point the way they should go. When their faith or diligence in keeping the commandments was lacking, the instrument would not work. (See 1 Ne. 16: 18:12.)

One writer stated that the compass and its operation was "not without a shadow" or type of things spiritual. He wrote:

"For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass, which would point unto them a straight course to the promised land.

"And now I say, is there not a type in this thing? For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise.

"... do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would look they might live; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever.

"... see that ye look to God and live." (Al. 37:43-47.)

I fear that many of us rush about from day to day taking for granted the holy scriptures. We scramble to honor appointments with physicians, lawyers, and businessmen. Yet we think nothing of postponing interviews with Deity—postponing scripture study. Little wonder we develop anemic souls and lose our direction in living. How much bet-

ter it would be if we planned and held sacred fifteen or twenty minutes a day for reading the scriptures. Such interviews with Deity would help us recognize his voice and enable us to receive guidance in all of our affairs.

We must look to God through the scriptures.

### Conversion story

Near the turn of the century two missionaries approached a mountain village in one of the Hawaiian Islands. A man standing near his hut saw them coming and said to his children who stood nearby, "Run down the hill and tell those men to go back. We are not interested in what they are preaching." The children obeyed their father.

The missionaries, however, continued up the hill. Upon reaching the crest, they walked to the father and said, "We do not mean to be rude. But we have traveled many miles to tell you that there is a living prophet on the earth today."

A look of excitement swept over the man's face. "What did you say?" he asked.

The missionaries repeated their testimony: "There is a living prophet on the earth today, and we want to share with you his message."

Turning to his children, the man exclaimed, "Quickly, run and get mother, and call together your brothers and sisters. Tell them that there is a living prophet." A short time later this family accepted the gospel and was baptized. (Related to Elder Asay by Tom Kaleo of Hawaii, about his own father.)

### Role of prophets

Since ancient times the Lord has made his will known through prophets. Such men are specially prepared and called to receive and teach truth. It is their mission to serve as God's mouthpiece.

Amos declared: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Was Amos speaking only of his day and age? Of course not. He knew that God is no respecter of persons. He knew that God's love for his children is the same in all generations. He knew the need for continuing revelation.

Through a modern prophet these words were spoken:

"Wherefore the voice of the Lord is unto the ends of the earth. . . .

"And the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people." (D&C 1:11, 14.)

### Marching orders

How foolish it is to suppose that an army can march or fight effectively without instructions from the commanding officer. How inconsistent it is to think that yesterday's strategies and maneuvers will win today's battles. It may be true that the principles of warfare remain somewhat unchanged from one generation to another; however, weapons change, battlefields differ, the foe becomes wiser, and many other conditions develop which require continuous commands from the leader.

Christ, as the head of his Church and general of his royal army, has in times past and will in times future call the cadence for his loyal followers. He gives the commands to move forward through his prophet leaders; he gives the commands to halt through his prophet leaders. Eventually, victory will be the prize of those faithful soldiers who heed his instructions and remain steadfast within the ranks.

We thank God for a living prophet. And we sing praises to the heavens for the privilege of receiving through that prophet commands and counsel fitted to meet our eternal needs.

Oh, how we have need to look to

God through his living prophet and live.

### Fiery serpents

As the children of Israel journeyed in the wilderness toward the land of Edom, they became discouraged and spoke against God and Moses, their leader. So "the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people," and they bit the complainers and many died. In time, the people recognized their folly and pleaded with Moses, saying: "We have sinned . . . against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us" (Num. 21:6-7.)

Moses did pray in behalf of his followers, and in answer to his prayer the Lord instructed: "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live" (Num. 21:8).

Moses again did as the Lord instructed.

Left at this point, one wonders what happened. How many were obedient? How many were not? Did anyone look and live? Answers to these questions are found in the Book of Mormon. One prophet explained: "He [the Lord] sent fiery flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished" (1 Ne. 17:41).

The type raised up in the wilderness, the serpent on the pole, symbolized Christ upon the cross. Jesus himself taught this truth. Many times he forecast his cruel form of death; and on at least one occasion, he made reference to Moses and the wilderness incident. Note these words of the Master:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

"That whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15).

We, like Israel of old, must rivet our eyes and minds upon the cross of Christ if we hope to gain eternal life, because through his resurrection we will gain the victory over physical death. And his atonement opens up to us a way to overcome our sins, a way to spiritual rebirth, and a way back to the presence of God.

Oh, how we must look to Christ and live.

The direction of our look is critical. From the rooftop King David "saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon" (2 Sam. 11:2). He looked across the way, and his heart was filled with lust. He looked; he fell.

Judas Iscariot fixed his eye upon thirty pieces of silver. Greed overcame his righteous desires. His misplaced look cost his life, his soul, and the thirty coins. (See Matt. 27:3-10.)

Our looks must not be allowed to wander across the way or to become fixed upon the perishable things of the

world. The eye, "the light of the body" (Matt. 6:22), must be trained to look upward. We must look to God and live!

We invite all men everywhere—the young, the older, the rising generation—

To look to God through the scriptures, for they testify of him;

To look to God through a living prophet, for he teaches us of that God whom President Tanner spoke about. We testify and invite people to look to Christ.

I testify that we can hear the voice of Deity through the scriptures; I testify that there is a living prophet among us; and I testify that Christ is the name whereby salvation is extended to all of us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder Carlos E. Asay of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

## Elder Thomas S. Monson

Who can help but be uplifted and inspired just to worship in this historic tabernacle and to listen to this glorious choir?

It has been said that "when Evan Stephens was conductor of the Tabernacle Choir, he was thrilled on one occasion by a sermon delivered by the late President Joseph F. Smith on the subject, [of "The Faith of Latter-day Saint Youth."] At the close of the service Professor Stephens strolled alone up City Creek Canyon [to the north], pondering the inspired words of the President. Suddenly [the inspiration of heaven] came upon him and seated upon a rock which was standing firm under the pressure of the rushing water, he wrote with a pencil" these words:

*Shall the youth of Zion falter  
In defending truth and right?  
While the enemy assaileth,  
Shall [they] shrink or shun the fight?*

*No!*

*True to the faith that [their] parents have  
cherished,  
True to the truth for which martyrs have  
perished,  
To God's command, Soul, heart, and  
hand,  
Faithful and true [they] will ever stand.  
(Hymns, no. 157; J. Spencer Cornwall,  
Stories of Our Mormon Hymns, Salt  
Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963, p. 173.)*

### LDS youth true to the faith

In that early day, I am confident

that youth were faced with difficult challenges to meet and vexing problems to solve. Youth is not a time of ease nor of freedom from perplexing questions. It wasn't then, and it surely isn't today. In fact, as time passes it seems that the difficulties of youth increase in size and scope. Temptation continues to loom large on life's horizon. Accounts of violence, theft, drug abuse, and pornography blare forth from the television screen and peer constantly from most daily newspapers. Such examples blur our vision and fault our thinking. Soon assumptions become generally accepted opinions, and all youth everywhere are categorized as "not so good as yesterday," or "the worst generation yet." How wrong are such opinions! How incorrect are such statements!

True, today is a new day with new trials, new troubles, and new temptations, but hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saint youth strive constantly and serve diligently, true to the faith, as their counterparts of earlier years so nobly did. Because the contrast between good and evil is so stark, the exceptions to the prevailing trends are magnified, observed, and appreciated by decent persons throughout the world.

### BYU students

Let me share with you a pointed letter which came from a resident of Minnesota. It was addressed to Brigham Young University:

"Gentlemen:

"Beginning December 22, I made a bus trip from southern Minnesota to Florida via Des Moines and Chicago and points south.

"There was a large group of young men and women traveling the approximately same route from Des Moines. These fine young people were students from Brigham Young [University] going home for the holidays.

"They were all very polite, well-behaved, articulate young men and women. It was a pleasure to travel with

them—to know them—and it gave me a new hope for the future.

"I realized that the university cannot do this. Young men and women of their caliber are the product of fine homes. The credit is due the parents. I cannot reach the parents, so my appreciation must go to the school."

Such comments are not isolated, but rather typical, for which we are ever pleased. Our Latter-day Saint students are excellent examples of faith in action.

### LDS missionaries

Another group which amazes the world and inspires faith is that army of Latter-day Saint missionaries, now more than 26,600 strong, currently serving throughout the world. All through their lives, these young men and women have prepared for and awaited that special day when a mission call is received. Fathers become justifiably proud and mothers somewhat anxious. Well do I remember the recommendation form of one missionary on which the bishop had written:

"This is the most outstanding young man I have ever recommended. He has excelled in all aspects of his life. He was president of his Aaronic Priesthood quorums and an officer at his high school. He lettered in track and football. I have never recommended a more outstanding candidate. I am proud to be his father."

More generally, the bishop and stake president write, "John is a fine young man. He has prepared for his mission physically, mentally, financially, and spiritually. He will serve gladly and with distinction wherever he is called."

One day I was with President Spencer W. Kimball as he signed these special calls to full-time missionary service. Suddenly he noticed the call of his own grandson. He signed his name as president of the Church and then penned a personal line at the bottom which read,

"I'm proud of you. Love, Grandpa."

When the call is received, the college text is closed and the scriptures opened. Family, friends, and often a special friend are left behind. Suspended are dating, dancing, and driving, as the three *Ds* are exchanged for the three *Ts*—tracting, teaching, and testifying.

### Missionary profiles of faith

Let us examine specifically several missionary profiles of faith, that we might better consider the question "Shall the youth of Zion falter?"

For a first profile, I mention Jose Garcia from Old Mexico. Born in poverty but nurtured in faith, Jose prepared for a mission call. I was present the day his recommendation was received. There appeared the statement: "Brother Garcia will serve at great sacrifice to his family, for he is the means of much of the family support. He has but one possession—a treasured stamp collection—which he is willing to sell, if necessary, to help finance his mission."

President Kimball listened attentively as this statement was read to him, and then he responded: "Have him sell his stamp collection. Such sacrifice will be to him a blessing." Then, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, this loving prophet said, "Each month at Church headquarters we receive thousands of letters from all parts of the world. See that we save these stamps and provide them to Jose at the conclusion of his mission. He will have, without cost, the finest stamp collection of any young man in Mexico."

There seemed to echo from another place, another time, the experience of the Master:

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

"And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

"And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all." (Luke 12:1-3.)

"For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:44).

For a second profile, I turn from Mexico to a missionary at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, desperately struggling to become proficient in the German language, that he might be an effective missionary to the people of southern Germany. Each day as he opened his German grammar text, he noticed with interest and curiosity that the front cover displayed a picture of a most quaint and ancient house in Rothenburg, West Germany. Beneath the picture, the location was given. In his heart that young man determined, "I'll visit that house and teach the truth to whoever lives within it." This he did. The result was the conversion and baptism of Sister Helma Hahn. Today she devotes much of her time speaking to tourists who come from all over the world to see her house. She delights in telling them of the blessings which the gospel of Jesus Christ has brought to her. Her house is perhaps one of the most frequently photographed houses in the entire world. No visitor leaves without hearing in simple yet earnest words her testimony of praise and gratitude. That missionary who brought to Sister Hahn the gospel remembered the sacred charge: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

Profile number three also relates to a missionary of unflinching faith, Elder Mark Skidmore. When he received his call to Norway, he knew not one word of Norwegian—yet he realized that to teach and to testify he would need proficiency in the language of the Norwegian people. To himself he made a private vow: "I will not speak English until I have brought into the waters of baptism my first Norwegian family." He plodded. He prayed. He pleaded. He worked. After the trial of his faith came the desired blessing. He taught and bap-

tized a choice family. He then spoke in English for the first time in six months. I met with him that same week. His expression was one of thanksgiving and gratitude. I thought of the words of Moroni, that courageous captain: "I seek not for power. . . . I seek not for honor of the world, but for the glory of my God." (Al. 60:36.)

For a final profile, I mention the mother of one noble missionary son. The family lived in the harsh climate of Star Valley, Wyoming. Summer there is brief and warm, while winter is long and cold. When a fine son of nineteen said farewell to home and family, he knew on whom the burden of work would fall. Father was ill and limited. To mother came the task of milking by hand the small dairy herd which sustained the family.

While serving as a mission president, I attended a seminar for all presidents held in Salt Lake City. My wife and I were privileged to devote an evening to meeting the parents of those missionaries who served with us. Some parents were wealthy and handsomely attired. They spoke in a gracious manner. Their faith was strong. Others were less affluent, of modest means and rather shy. They, too, were proud of their special missionary and prayed and sacrificed for his welfare.

Of all the parents whom I met that evening, the best remembered was that mother from Star Valley. As she took my hand in hers I felt the large calluses which revealed the manual labor she daily performed. Almost apologetically, she attempted to excuse her rough hands, her wind-whipped face. She whispered, "Tell our son Spencer that we love him, that we're proud of him, and that we pray daily for him."

Until that night I had never seen an angel nor heard an angel speak. I never again could make that statement, for that angel mother carried with her the Spirit of Christ. She, who with that same hand clasped in the hand of God had walked bravely into the valley of the shadow of death to bring to this

mortal life her son, had indelibly impressed my life.

Nurtured and guided by such noble mothers, missionaries match the description of Helaman's throng:

"And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted.

"Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him." (Al 53:20-21.)

### Stand with youth of Zion

Such profiles prompt faith. They instill confidence. They teach truth. They testify of goodness. They help provide the answer to that question:

*Shall the youth of Zion falter  
In defending truth and right?  
While the enemy assaileth,  
Shall [they] shrink or shun the fight?  
No!*

*True to the faith that [their] parents have  
cherished,  
True to the truth for which martyrs have  
perished,  
To God's command, Soul, heart, and  
hand,  
Faithful and true [they] will ever stand.*

My sincere prayer is that we will stand with the youth of Zion, remain true to the faith, for which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Choir sang, "For I Am Called by Thy Name," without announcement.

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just listened to Elder



Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "For I Am Called by Thy Name."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who will be our concluding speaker.

## Elder Mark E. Petersen

Last week we passed one of the most significant anniversaries recognized by our Church. It marked the visitations of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, preliminary to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our day. (See Joseph Smith 2:28-65.)

Moroni came back from the dead, a resurrected man!

He had lived in America some fifteen hundred years ago and was the sole survivor of his people in a series of tragic battles which took many lives.

He had witnessed the destruction of his whole nation, including his own family. In bitter vengeance their enemies had vowed their complete annihilation, and now this threat was accomplished.

### Mormon records fall of his people

Moroni's father was commander of the armies of this ancient people, known as Nephites. His name was Mormon. The war of which we speak took place here in America some four hundred years after Christ. (See Morm. 6.)

As the fighting neared its end, Mormon gathered the remnant of his forces about a hill which they called Cumorah, located in what is now the western part of the state of New York.

Their enemies, known as Lamanites, came against them on this hill. Of that dreadful event Mormon wrote:

"My people, with their wives and their children, did now behold the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them.

"... Every soul was filled with terror because of the greatness of their numbers.

"And it came to pass that they did fall upon my people with the sword, and with the bow, and with the arrow, and with the ax, and with all manner of weapons of war.

"And it came to pass that my men were hewn down, yea, even my ten thousand who were with me, and I fell wounded in the midst." (Morm. 6:7-10.)

Then he spoke of other leaders serving with him in the Nephite army, all of whom had fallen with the forces under their command. He accounted for about a quarter of a million Nephite soldiers killed in that final encounter at Cumorah.

He mourned over this great loss and wrote:

"My soul was rent with anguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried:

"O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!

"Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss.

"O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen!

"But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.

"O that ye had repented before this great destruction had come upon you." (Morm. 6:16-20, 22.)

Why were the Nephites destroyed?

They had been told that it was a privilege for anyone to live on the American continent, for it is a promised land, and those who reside here must abide by the rules that God decreed pertaining to it.

Only those who are willing to serve Jesus Christ, who is the God of this land, may remain here. Others will be swept off. (See Eth. 2:10-12.)

The Nephites knew this, but with malice aforethought, they reveled in sin and rejected the teachings of Christ.

Having failed to meet the conditions by which they could remain on this promised land, they were swept off, and with great violence.

### Moroni's farewell

At the time Mormon recorded the details of this dreadful tragedy, he said that only twenty-four remained alive of all the men, women, and children of the Nephites. These surviving few were themselves killed the next day—with one exception, Moroni, whom the Lord spared to close up the written record.

When finished with the record, Moroni was to hide it up in that same Hill Cumorah which was their battlefield. It would come forth in modern times as the Book of Mormon, named after Moroni's father, the historian who compiled it.

Realizing the importance of completing it, this lone survivor wrote: "I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father, Mormon" (Morm. 8:1).

Then he wrote a description of the last battle and added: "I . . . remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people. . . ."

"Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth. . . ."

"My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go; and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live I know not." (Morm. 8:3-5.)

As he wrote his fateful words, he said again that his people were annihi-

lated because they loved wickedness, rejected the counsel of God, and gave themselves over to seeking wealth and corruption. This made up the deadly concoction which brought about their extinction.

Had not the Lord said to them, as he says to us now, that America is a choice land and that those who live here must obey God or be swept off? And had he not kept his word to those rebellious Nephites, now totally wiped out? So it is that today's archaeologists find the ruins which are silent witnesses to the greatness that once was theirs.

In closing his record, and knowing that it would come to us, Moroni pleaded with us, the modern inhabitants of this land, to escape the kind of tragic end which had obliterated his people. He said:

"Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.

"And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; . . ."

"Ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel." (Morm. 8:35-36.)

### Problems in modern America

In prophecy also he spoke of the tragic moral pollutions which would engulf many modern Americans. He asked why we are so foolish as to revel in sin, why we would reject the Christ, and thereby invite disaster.

"Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ?" he asked, speaking to modern America, knowing full well that many might profess to believe in him and yet refuse to do his works (Morm. 8:38). It is by engaging in his works that we truly take his name upon us. It is not through lip service. Moroni knew that faith without works is dead. And so likewise should we.

He made it clear that advance warning is given to us who live today through the very book which he and his

father had written and which he was now about to bury in Cumorah. It would be published in our day to give us that warning.

Describing our day, he said the book would come forth when millions deny the power of God, when the world would be in turmoil, with earthquakes, violent storms, wars, and rumors of wars in many places. (See Morm. 8:26-34.)

He said it would be in a time of great pollution (see Morm. 8:31). Isn't it interesting that he would speak of great pollution on the earth? Does it remind you of the claims of our modern ecologists?

He said also that it would be in a time of extensive crime, of murders, robberies, lies, deceptions, and immorality. Think of those words in terms of today's cover-ups, bribes, thievings, embezzlements, and other fraudulent practices among individuals, in business, and also in government. Hasn't dishonesty almost become a way of life with many people?

Think, too, of the epidemic of social diseases sweeping the nations in the wake of their vast immorality. What frightful pollutions these things are!

### Warning

Before his death, Mormon wrote that his record would, of course, be a warning to those he called Gentiles, but that it would be a blessing to the Lamanites. Also he said that it would come with a special message to the Jews. For them it was published that they "may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant" (Morm. 5:14). Consider the current significance of the scripture!

Mormon then wrote directly to us

as modern Americans who now occupy this promised land and said: "How can ye stand before the power of God, except ye shall repent and turn from your evil ways?"

"Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power, and at his great command the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll?"

"Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you." (Morm. 5:22-24.)

Can we ignore such a warning, directed specifically at this generation?

Moroni joined his father with this: "Who can stand against the works of the Lord? Who can deny his sayings? Who will rise up against the almighty power of the Lord? Who will despise the works of the Lord? Who will despise the children of Christ?"

"Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord, for ye shall . . . perish." (Morm. 9:26.)

It should be remembered that these men wrote to us out of the desperation of the event they were passing through as the Nephites were being wiped off the face of the earth. They knew that we live here now under the same conditions that were given to them.

### Testimony to our generation

As Moroni wrote his last testimony, he realized how important his book would be to our generation. He asked that we read it and believe it. So he pleaded:

"I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moro. 10:4).

These were among his very last words. His pen had already inscribed this frightening but divine warning about America:

"This is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off" (Eth. 2:10).

He gave us the lesson of the annihilation of the Nephites as a case in point. He wrote similarly of the tragedy of the Jaredites. It was another case in point. Do we realize that this same kind of destruction can come upon us, and for the same reason?

So this is the message of Moroni. He came back from the dead to deliver it—in these modern times.

His people were Americans, too. His words constituted a people-to-people message, ancient Americans speaking to modern Americans. Theirs was the voice of bitter experience seeking to persuade us to avoid the dreadful conditions which engulfed them.

Moroni announced that he will face us on Judgment Day in defense of his words (see Moro. 10:27). This he will do, together with his book, for out of the books we shall be judged, and the Book of Mormon is one of those books.

We now have it in our hands. It is published to the world. It carries God's message to all. It gives full and fair warning to this generation, and the warning is true!

Read it! Believe it! Pray over it! Obey its counsels! It can lead us unerringly to Christ!

The last words of Moroni! Dare we forget them? God grant that we never will, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Following Elder Mark E. Petersen's remarks, the Choir sang, "I Will Greatly Rejoice," without announcement.

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### President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "I Will Greatly Rejoice."

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations who offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this Conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

These services are being carried over radio to 71 stations in countries of South America and 61 stations in Australia. They are being broadcast over 148 television stations in the United States and Canada and over 57 cable television systems in the United States by RC American satellite. For the first time part of the Conference is being broadcast in Italy by 50 television stations and 20 radio stations.

The proceedings of this Conference have been carried over direct oceanic cable to hundreds of members and friends assembled in chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and Austria.

We shall conclude this fourth session of the Conference with the Tabernacle Choir singing, "God Bless Our Prophet Dear," after which the benediction will be pronounced by Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Mexico North Area.

This Conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

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The Choir sang, "God Bless Our Prophet Dear."

The benediction was pronounced by Elder Richard G. Scott.

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## SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

### FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1978.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session and President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted it.

Music was furnished by the Tabernacle Choir with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother John Longhurst at the organ.

President Romney made the following remarks at the beginning of the meeting:

#### President Marion G. Romney

President Spencer W. Kimball, who presides at this and all other sessions of the Conference has asked me to conduct this session.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall and Salt Palace. Elders Eldred G. Smith and O. Leslie Stone preside at the Assembly Hall, and Elders William H. Bennett and Royden G. Derrick preside at the Salt Palace.

Sessions of this conference are being carried over hundreds of radio and television stations to a large audience in the United States and many other parts of the world.

We send our greeting and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

This morning's session was

broadcast by oceanic cable to Europe and heard by members assembled in many chapels in England, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, and Belgium.

The Tabernacle Choir with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Brother John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir will begin this service by singing, "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

The invocation will be offered by Elder Franklin D. Richards, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The Choir sang the hymn, "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah."

Elder Franklin D. Richards offered the invocation.

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#### President Marion G. Romney

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "Psalm 149."

Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve.

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The Choir sang, "Psalm 149."

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#### President Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

He will be followed by Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I shall speak of one of the greatest gifts ever received by mortal men. It is a superlative spiritual endowment which in its very nature sets the Latter-day Saints apart from the world and makes them a peculiar people. It is a gift which the Lord always gives to his people, which identifies them as the chosen of God, and without which nothing else of a religious nature has any especial value or enduring worth.

### Revelation

I shall speak of revelation, of the opening of the heavens, of revelation as it is given to prophets and apostles for the guidance of the Church and the world, and also of revelation to the Saints in general for their own guidance and that of their families.

I have sought diligently for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preparing these words and now pray—sincerely and devoutly—that your hearts may be open as you hear them, that your bosoms will burn with living fire, and that you will know by the power of the Holy Spirit that the doctrines taught and the witness borne are true.

How does a gracious God commune with his children on earth? How can those of us on earth, whose experiences are bounded by time and space and frailties of the flesh, comprehend that which is infinite and eternal? By what means can mortal eyes see within the veil, or the ears of earth hear the voices of eternity?

### A strange thing

It is truly a strange thing for prophets to speak of future events as though they were present before their seeric eyes. It is truly a wondrous thing for earthbound eyes to pierce the fogs and darkness of our planet and see within the gates of heaven. It is marvelous, almost beyond belief, that mere mortals

can begin to comprehend him who is eternal, can know of a surety of things past, present, and future, and can have the assurance of an eternal inheritance with immortal beings who dwell in everlasting glory.

But strange or not, so it is. He who is eternal has provided a way. A gracious and loving Father has ordained the laws, by obedience to which we may learn his ways and know his will.

### Gift of the Holy Ghost

Those who believe in Christ as he is revealed by the apostles and prophets of their day, those who forsake the world and repent of all their sins, those who covenant with the Lord in the waters of baptism to love and serve him all their days—these are the ones who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

This gift is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, based on faithfulness. This gift is the right to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit. "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations," the Prophet said, for "the Holy Ghost is a revelator" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977, p. 328).

Revelations come in many ways, but they are always manifest by the power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus' promise to the ancient apostles was: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). Our modern scriptures say: "The Comforter knoweth all things, and beareth record of the Father and of the Son" (D&C 42:17). They also give us this promise: "By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moro. 10:5).

When men are quickened by the power of the Spirit, then the Lord can

reveal his truths to them in whatever way he chooses.

### A new dispensation

The Father and the Son rent the heavens and came down to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820 to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times. From these two glorious personages he then received the promise that if he remained true and faithful he would be the instrument in their hands of restoring the fulness of the everlasting gospel.

The Lord Jehovah—the God of our Fathers; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Lord Omnipotent who was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea—appeared in glory to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the third day of April in 1836 in the Kirtland Temple.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

“... I will manifest myself to my people in mercy. . . .

“Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments.” (D&C 110:3-4, 7-8.)

Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and divers angels came—“all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood” (D&C 128:21).

Moses returned to bring the keys of the gathering of Israel; Elias came to restore “the gospel of Abraham” and promise mortal men, once again, that in them and in their seed all generations might be blessed; and Elijah came to confer the sealing power so that once again legal administrators might have power to bind on earth and have their

acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens. (See D&C 110:11-13.)

Peter, James, and John restored the keys of the kingdom of God and brought back again the apostolic commission to preach the gospel in all nations and to every creature. Moroni came to restore the Book of Mormon, and John the Baptist to bring again the Aaronic Priesthood with all its keys and powers. (See D&C 128:20-21.)

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, on February 16, 1832, at Hiram, Ohio, saw in vision the kingdoms of glory in the eternal world and received such an outpouring of grace and truth as has seldom come to mortal men. (See D&C 76.)

### Voice of God heard again

The voice of God—speaking audibly after the manner of our language, and also speaking by the power of the Spirit in the minds of men—has been heard over and over again in our day.

Times without number faithful members of the Lord's church have labored and struggled with near unsolvable problems, have reached what seemed to them to be proper solutions and have then received a spiritual confirmation certifying to the truth and verity of their decisions.

We cannot speak of revelation without bearing testimony of the great and wondrous outpouring of divine knowledge that came to President Spencer W. Kimball setting forth that the priesthood and all of the blessings and obligations of the gospel should now be offered to those of all nations, races, and colors.

Truly, the Holy Ghost is a revealer. He speaks and his voice is the voice of the Lord. He is Christ's minister, his agent, his representative. He says what the Lord Jesus would say if he were personally present.

### The word of the Lord

Speaking “unto all those who” are

"ordained unto" his "priesthood," the Lord says: "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (D&C 68:2-4).

Truly this is that promised day when "every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20).

If all of the Latter-day Saints lived as they should, then Moses' petition would be granted: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29).

This is the promised day when "God shall give unto" us "knowledge by his Holy Spirit," when, "by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost," we shall gain knowledge "that has not been revealed since the world was until now" (D&C 121:26).

This is the day of which Joseph Smith said: "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them" (*Teachings*, p. 149).

And we look forward to that glorious millennial day when "they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:34).

### No end to revelation

But even now there is no end to the revelations we may receive. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 9).

To the prophets, seers, and revelators he will manifest his mind and his

will concerning the Church and the world. To the presiding officers in the stakes and wards and quorums he will reveal what should be for those organizations. To fathers and mothers and children he will reveal "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19) to guide them along the way to perfection.

It is his will that we gain testimonies, that we seek revelation, that we covet to prophesy, that we desire spiritual gifts, and that we seek the face of the Lord.

The Lord wants all his children to gain light and truth and knowledge from on high. It is his will that we pierce the veil and rend the heavens and see the visions of eternity.

### Knowledge of God

By his own mouth he has given us this promise: "It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am" (D&C 93:1).

Such is his promise to us here and now while we yet dwell as mortals in a world of sorrow and sin. It is our privilege even now—the privilege of all who hold the holy priesthood—if we will strip ourselves from jealousies and fears and humble ourselves before him, as he has said, to have the veil rent and see him and know that he is. (See D&C 67:10.)

To carnal men, and even to those among us whose souls are not attuned to the Infinite, these promises may seem as the gibberish of alien tongues, but to those whose souls are afire with the light of heaven they will be as a bush that burns and is not consumed. As Paul, our fellow apostle and witness of that same Lord whose servants we are, expressed it: "The things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God" (Inspired Version, 1 Cor. 2:11).

Now may I bear a solemn witness, one borne of the Spirit, that these doc-



trines are true, that the Lord God is raining down righteousness upon his people, and that he will continue to do so until that perfect day when they know all things and become as he is. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brothers and sisters, I ask for your faith and prayers that the Lord's Spirit might touch our hearts as together we consider an item vital to our happiness here and hereafter.

One of the greatest needs of mankind generally and of all of us individually is to have more and stronger faith in our Creator. To know that he is literally our Father and that he is kind and just and understands us and knows our needs is one of the greatest treasures we can possess. This treasure is obtained by faith—strong faith.

### Faith to be tested

Now it may seem easy to have faith in God when things are going well. But the law of growth requires constant effort and stretching. Thus, in order to have our faith strengthened, it must be stretched and tried and tested.

One of the areas of testing that comes to many of us is when something occurs over which we apparently have little or no control and which to us seems unfair.

For example, I have always been moved as I have seen those who are required to operate on less than their full faculties. I, along with some of you, have asked the question, Why? On many occasions when an accident has occurred, or a terrible illness, or an un-

timely death, or when a mentally retarded or physically handicapped child has been born, or some other seemingly difficult-to-explain situation has taken place, people have come to me and to others wanting reassurance.

I, along with you, have taken great consolation in the scriptures as they tell us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father knowing. (See Matt. 10:29.) We believe the scriptures, but when it happens to *our* loved one or *our* friend, the question of why still rings. I do not have all the answers, but hopefully the following experience, which happened several years ago, may be helpful to some who are still battling the question of why.

### Help for stricken infant

On a small Pacific island an infant girl was born to a faithful family. They called her Felila. There was happiness and joy as this grateful spirit made her debut into mortal life, but soon there were problems. Her head was abnormally large. The doctors diagnosed it as hydrocephalus. The questions of brain damage, of normalcy, of other problems all raised their haunting heads. After much fasting and prayer the elders quorum president approached the branch president, who in turn talked with the district president, who after adequate

checking came to me as the mission president to see if there were some additional help available.

The medical authorities were consulted, and it was determined that there was little if anything they could do locally. Letters were written, information was sent back and forth, x-rays were taken and analyzed. There was so much to do—so many questions to be answered, so many pieces to fit together. Finally after exasperatingly long delays, things began to fall into place. A family in Salt Lake agreed to accept full responsibility for the infant, even if it meant years of outpatient care; the doctors agreed on the possibility of her eventual recovery; the hospital accepted the case on a service basis; funds were raised for her air fare; some local travelers arranged their schedules to bring her right to the hospital. But there were other problems—visas, health certificates, reservations, passports.

All during these trying days the family, and the elders quorum, and even the whole branch continued to fast and pray. The time of departure of the infrequent airplane grew near.

One morning, amidst myriads of other pressing matters, I had the strong impression that I must take the time *now* and put forth the extra effort required to get everything done so she could go. I got on the overseas telephone. The consulate finally agreed to issue a visa; the airlines made a special reservation; the passport people agreed to waive the normal regulations; others gave that extra effort and cooperation; and soon all was in order.

Normally I would have sent someone to bring the family in to sign the final papers, but again I felt strongly impressed that I should personally go and see the branch president. I located him in the early afternoon near the school where he was teaching. He was standing alone outside as though he were waiting for me.

Excitedly I ran up to him: "Guess what? It's all set. Miraculously everything has worked out and Felila can

leave tomorrow. Please get word to the family immediately."

### **Felila called home**

His calm, penetrating gaze quelled my exuberance. "It's true," I said. "I know it's been long and there have been lots of disappointments, but she really is going now. What's the matter?"

His steady gaze seemed to penetrate my very soul. Then softly in his liquid native tongue he informed me that when all the preparations had been made, when the hearts of so many had been stretched in service, when the goal of unity and selflessness had been achieved in those many hearts, when all had made the final commitment of others above self, at the height of all this activity that very morning, little Felila had quietly and unobtrusively slipped away—gone to that better care which so many had fasted and prayed and worked so long and hard for her to receive.

Gone? This morning? But all that work, all that time, all that fasting and praying and those strong feelings. Gone? No!

Without once shifting his gaze, he, having more faith than I, offered a few words of truth and encouragement, then quietly turned and rejoined his class.

### **Life is eternal**

And I was left alone, or so it seemed. I moved slowly and heavily down that dusty trail. Why? Why? After all that work and that strong faith of so many and those impressions, why?

I sensed the brightness of the sun and felt the warmth of the breeze as it lazily tossed the palm leaves and slowly shifted the silent clouds against the clear blue sky. A feeling came over me. I realized that the earth was beautiful, that life went on and was eternal. And while I cannot describe fully what happened next, part of the experience is proper to relate. The best explanation is contained in the phrase, "I was over-

come by the Spirit." It was as though one took me by the hand and led me to a high place and stood by me and said, "Look." And I looked and beheld such beauty and magnificence as man cannot conceive. And I heard a voice, such a tender, compassionate voice—yet so unmistakably powerful—that all nature stood still and listened and obeyed.

"Come home, Felila, my daughter. Come home to the care your loved ones have sought for you. I have heard their prayers and have known their fasting and love for you, and I answer. Come home, my daughter. You have finished your mission in life. Hearts have been softened; souls have been stretched; faith has been increased. Come home now, Felila."

He knew her! He knew her name. He knew all about her and about all those others. How perfect our Father's love! He had heard the prayers. He had done what was best. He knew everything—which thing, though I believed, I never had supposed. In some marvelous way, which is beyond our mortal comprehension, he knows and understands all things.

My questions as to why—as to justice and reasons—were all at that moment completely swept away. They were so irrelevant, my questioning so totally out of place, like one trying to dig the Grand Canyon with a teaspoon.

### **Total and complete justice**

Oh, how we must remember the words of Jacob as he said:

"Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. . . .

"Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in

great mercy, over all his works." (Jac. 4:8, 10.)

I testify that there is total and complete justice in eternity. God's dealings with man have no tinge of partiality or of favoritism or of capriciousness or of anything less than complete consistency and balance and perfectness.

Some say, "But it has been years. We have fasted and prayed so long and so hard. What does the Lord expect?"

There may be many answers. I give only one. That is: He expects more, and it will be for your eternal benefit and blessing. That I know. As we begin to comprehend eternity, we gain a whole new catalog of values.

### **The Lord understands**

To you who have the responsibility and the privilege and the opportunity of caring for others, may you through those long hours and days and years ever know, as I know, that the Lord understands.

Do not be discouraged; do not attempt to counsel the Lord. He determines, not you. He knows hearts and souls and needs. He measures intents and knows spirits.

Caring is all-important—the intensity, the duration, the amount, the quality, the extent. For in God's wisdom, caring creates faith.

Oh, may we all have a little Felila in our lives—and there are so many: the retarded, the infirm, those needing special help, both spiritually and physically, the aged, the infants,—all these to soften our hearts in love, to stretch our souls in tenderness, to confirm our worth in caring for others, and above all to strengthen our faith in him who knows all, even him who in caring totally gave his all, and in giving his all, lives forever, and in living forever, rules eternally, and in ruling eternally, cares omnipotently, whose coming and going is one eternal round I pray in his name, even the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Marion G. Romney

Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder S.

Dilworth Young, Emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder S. Dilworth Young

I shall begin by bearing a testimony. I am certain and bear the witness, by applying the principle just stated by Brother McConkie, that the calling which has come to me and my colleagues in the last two days is as much the inspiration of the Lord as was my call thirty-three years ago. I should like you to know that.

### Childhood days

In this day of mechanical marvels my mind hearkens back to the days of my childhood. I suppose that is natural enough for those upon whom age descends.

I remember well the old one-room rock meetinghouse of the Second Ward on Seventh South between Fourth and Fifth East in Salt Lake City. This particular ward was one of the gathering places for members from Denmark. The bishop, Heber C. Iverson, could speak their language. In fast day meetings, testimonies were often unintelligible to me as the Saints struggled to testify in English, their new tongue. In Sunday School the room was divided into classrooms by green curtains hanging from wires overhead. If I was not interested in what my teacher was saying, I could choose from five other classes, all of which I could hear. It was always interesting to try to solve the problem of the identity of the boy who kept poking me in the back through the curtain at my rear.

Even in those early years I somehow grasped the idea that I alone must

work out my salvation, and that I could not blame anyone else if I didn't. Today I cannot identify the exact teaching of this principle, but I suspect that it came from those testimonies I heard in the Second Ward, the Sunday School class, my parents, and the repetition of the second Article of Faith, which I repeated many times in that day. This article states: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."

### Responsible for own acts

I made an early resolve to be good and thus escape the punishment. The word *punish* was also quite common. My father and mother used it to explain to me why I was being spanked, both before the event and after. I grew up with the sure knowledge that I was responsible for my own acts of good and evil.

I have come to know that the acts of men, once governed by the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, are in my day to a great extent governed by the whims of the persons committing the act. The excuse is that one has to "do his own thing." And apparently the commandments are forgotten. But they have not been cancelled. They still stand as a beacon light on the way to eternal life—which is, of course, eternal happiness and joy.

### The Ten Commandments

The stern, short statements of the

Ten Commandments have always held me in awe. They become more sharply etched when I see some of the acts of people. Let me quote, in part, Abinadi, who repeated them to King Noah:

1. Thou shalt have no other God before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

10. Thou shalt not covet. (See Mosiah 12:35-36; 13:12-24.)

Abinadi told those present with King Noah that he perceived that these Ten Commandments were, to quote him, "not written in your hearts" (Mosiah 13:11).

But there they stand, the immutable word from the great meeting of Moses with his Maker amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai.

### Application in our day

In our day the necessity of following the Ten Commandments is all the more urgent. Five of them were repeated in section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Others are spoken of in other sections. I early resolved to keep them all.

Incidentally, to this generation of young fathers I suggest that they spend overtime teaching their children the fifth commandment, which tells them to honor their parents.

We teach children they must not lie and steal, but do little to have them understand that adolescent rebellion is a flagrant breaking of the commandment to honor parents. To make the teaching

effective, parents must live to deserve the honor children are commanded to give them. It is devastating to a child to learn that his father does not have integrity.

### Scriptural injunctions

One day I came upon some words of Micah which seemed to me to state my line of conduct. I quote them, for even now they arouse the best that is in me:

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8).

"To do justly"—I desire that. "To love mercy"—my heart swells at the thought. And "to walk humbly with thy God" brings me close to him. These thoughts are repeated in section 11, verse 12 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Later I heard Sister Jessie Evans Smith sing a solo as part of a great Tabernacle Choir number. Anyone who ever heard her sing those words was lifted into resolve to make his life conform to the teaching. In the words from Psalm 24 the Psalmist first asks two questions: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" The answer comes with startling simplicity: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Then comes the promise: "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (Ps. 24:3-5.) The Psalmist then goes on to assert that the generation thus obedient is the generation that truly seeks his face.

### Marks of the righteous

These statements of the qualities of character which mark the righteous can be held in our hearts as a guide in those situations which confront us in our daily intercourse with our fellowmen. We dis-

cover then that it is not difficult to follow the teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he declared that we have as our standard of daily conduct to be "honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and [to do] good to all men" (Articles of Faith 13). For if one has clean hands and a pure heart, does justly, loves mercy, seeks not vanity, and walks humbly, the temptation to violate the Decalogue will hardly ever enter into his head.

I testify that he who obeys the commandments and thus seeks the virtuous, righteous life will find the pearl of great price of knowledge of the Son of God who is our Savior, and, finding this, will have joy. If in addition he loves and serves his fellowmen, he will add a chain of pearls and will find eternal life in the presence of his Heavenly Father and that Savior.

We obey the ordinances which make exaltation possible.

We follow and obey the code of conduct which makes it certain.

This dual obedience, faithfully kept, is our surest way of bearing testimony that we honor the Lord God, keep his commandments, and sustain President Kimball as his prophet. These are my desires as I bear witness of the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior. In his holy name, amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder S. Dilworth Young, Emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr.

On behalf of all of us, I'd like to say, we love you, President Young.

### Our little ones

Recently I held our first grandchild in my arms and had the same feelings come to me that I had when I held each one of my own children shortly after their birth. As I looked into their innocent faces, these questions came into my mind: "Who are you, my little one? What does Heavenly Father want you to accomplish in this life?" I imagine that many of you parents have had the same thoughts as you have held your infant children.

I wonder if Spencer W. Kimball's father had any idea, when he first held this infant son, that into his home had come a spirit ordained in the premortal life to someday grow in such spiritual strength and power that he would sit in this great conference today as our

prophet and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? It is possible, my brothers and sisters, that among the little ones in your homes and in your care are spirit children that were sent to you to be trained and prepared to fulfill callings as General Authorities, stake presidents, bishops, Relief Society or Primary presidents. In someone's home there is a little one sent from our Heavenly Father that someday will be called to sit in the seat where our great prophet now sits. Whoever is training our prophet of the future generations, please train him well. Teach him to love the Lord, the scriptures, and his fellowmen as President Kimball loves us today.

### Preparation for eternal roles

What can we do to better prepare our children spiritually for their eternal roles? Perhaps the most inclusive an-

swer is: Teach them how to live the principles of the gospel. To be good teachers, we must learn to be better listeners. Let me share one personal example: Our first child, Clark, when he was four years old, appeared to be guilty of some minor wrongdoing that at the time seemed to require some sound fatherly counsel. I took him into the bedroom and talked to him about why he must not ever again do what I had predetermined that he had done. When I concluded my great discourse, this little, brown-eyed boy looked into my eyes and said, "But Daddy, I didn't do it." Through his eyes his spirit talked to me and I knew that he was telling me the truth. I embraced him and asked for his forgiveness. His spirit, though in a four-year-old mortal body, spoke loudly to me that day, and I learned from him a great lesson: Always be a good listener.

Oh how important it is for parents to understand the eternal plan of our Heavenly Father, as he sends his spirit children here and entrusts them to us for a few short years. Just think of it! Within every human body dwells a living spirit born to our loving, eternal heavenly parents. When parents know this, they can better guide their families by focusing upon the eternal relationships and the true purposes of this life. No thinking parent would ever allow any verbal or physical abuse of their children to creep into their home and destroy the destiny of their eternal family.

### Physical limitations

Some children receive mortal bodies with limitations that might restrict their physical activities but not their spiritual development. In the Lord's eternal plan, perhaps the spiritual growth of other family members required the presence of a child with some physical limitation. Just this month a lovely family shared with me this poem written for their little girl:

*She looks into the world darkly,  
Though spiritual things do not hide.  
Chosen to affliction bear,  
As viewed from the mortal side.*

*Her spirit is not burdened;  
To Heavenly Father she's perfectly  
whole.*

*Who, and how great she is,  
On this side, cannot be told.*

*She's a very special spirit,  
In a very special place.  
Those who have looked upon her,  
Have seen an angel's face.  
(Ed Joyner, "Vicki Ann," unpublished.)*

### Importance of each soul

I stand in awe when I consider the great confidence Heavenly Father has placed in you and me when he allows us the privilege of being the mortal fathers and mothers to his eternal spirit offspring. We must never forget that he has a vested interest in every one of us, and we must realize how important each human soul is in God's eternal plan. When we understand the importance of each soul, we can go before him confidently in prayer to seek his guidance and direction in our sacred assignment as parents. He said, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). This seems to me to be best sum up the important role that mortal parents have in the great eternal plan of life for each member of our families.

I believe that most mortal bodies grow to physical maturity with a relatively simple effort on the part of parents. When we see that our children receive the proper rest, food, and exercise, we find that the physical body generally grows into full maturity on schedule. As the maturing process continues, we start to notice that the physical body begins to age. Wrinkles appear where the skin was smooth. Most hair turns gray, thins out a bit, and

then ultimately turns white. The process of aging continues and results in death. The eternal spirit of man then leaves its mortal home to return and report to our Heavenly Father.

### Spiritual values

Some parents become so expert at filling every physical desire for their children that they begin to suppose that all is well in this life and that their eternal stewardship is progressing right on schedule. I have noticed that some children living in too much luxury can lose their sense of spiritual values and misplace their eternal priorities. I believe that we must pause and take a careful inventory to determine how well our families are doing spiritually. We could ask how well are we feeding, nurturing, training, and exercising the spirits of our children; or how well have we taught, trained, loved, and inspired our children to build their spiritual muscles and strength? We are given many teaching moments, and the Church has given us the special family home evening to help us accomplish this purpose. Remember, eternity is now, not a vague, distant future. We prepare each day, right now, for eternal life. If we are not preparing for eternal life, we are preparing for something else, perhaps something far less.

I have noticed that the spirit of man is not like the body as it grows older, but rather is just the opposite. If the spirit of man is properly cared for, rather than becoming slower to move and less capable, as the body does, the spirit becomes more confident and waxes strong in the presence of God. (See D&C 121:45.) Through the eyes of the strong in spirit we can feel their power and strength. Those of us who are blessed to know the First Presidency and the members of the Council of the Twelve can witness that the age of their physical bodies has no relationship to the capacity of their spirits. I testify that when you clasp the hand of one of these

brethren you feel the power and the strength of the spirit that is within them, and you realize that through years of obedient living of the gospel they have developed their spirits to such a degree that they now can strengthen the entire Church. I know that thousands of our Saints have learned that spiritual growth is the most important part of life. How blessed are children who are raised by parents that understand and teach this to them.

### Solid spiritual training

My message, then, is this. We must carefully and conscientiously provide solid spiritual training for the eternal growth of our children. Thoughtful planning will be required because providing spiritual development for them is not quite as simple as meeting their physical needs.

The prophets of the Lord, both ancient and modern, have given clear instruction to you and me. Moses gave us the basic Ten Commandments. The Savior added to these instructions and gave to us the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1820, our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son appeared personally to the Prophet Joseph and set in motion the restoration of the fulness of the gospel, with all of the necessary priesthood powers to act in their names in spiritual matters. As one becomes more familiar with the revelations, both ancient and modern, the evidence is overwhelming that our Heavenly Father is much more concerned with the proper spiritual growth of his children than with the physical.

It is beautiful to know that if we can build upon a solid spiritual foundation—if we can repent of our sins and grow in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding—we can enjoy dwelling in the presence of our Heavenly Father and his Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, forever and ever. This is eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God (see D&C 14:7).

I know God lives and that all men



are his children. I testify that Jesus is the Christ and if all men will seek to know the truth and follow his example we will be able to live up to the spiritual expectations of our Heavenly Father. May we be blessed so to do, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Marion G. Romney**

Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jr., of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

After the singing, Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy who is Supervisor of the

Southeast Asia-Philippines Area, will speak to us.

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The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning."

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### **President Romney**

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He is Supervisor of the Southeast Asia-Philippines Area.

We shall then be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve.

## **Elder Jacob de Jager**

My dear brothers and sisters, I feel confident to stand before you at this hour, because just this morning I received a very important telegram from my seventeen-year-old daughter in Hong Kong. I would like to share the contents of that telegram with you. It says: "Dad, good luck with your talk. Love you. Audrey."

Knowing that Audrey is listening in to the proceedings of this conference, I would like to take the liberty to give her an answer. "Thank you, Audrey. I love you, too. Dad."

### **Advice of President Romney**

My dear brothers and sisters, I still remember the seminar for Regional Representatives that I attended in 1972. At the end of that seminar President Marion G. Romney, on his way out of the auditorium, walked through the aisle where I was standing with two big binders under one arm and a stack of printed materials under the other arm. President Romney stopped and said,

"Now, Brother de Jager, how are you going to teach all these inspired materials?"

I paused, thinking of an answer that would satisfy a member of the First Presidency of the Church. I replied, "President Romney, I shall teach in such a way that everyone will understand."

President Romney, a twinkle in his eye, said, "That's not enough; you shall teach in such a way that no one will misunderstand these divine materials." Then he walked on.

### **Teachings easily misunderstood**

Now, many years later, I begin to see more and more the wisdom of his counsel. People do easily misunderstand, like the sweet old sister I met in the ZCMI shopping mall the other day.

"Aren't you that Dutchman who spoke in general conference a while ago?" I said, "Yes, ma'am." Then she continued, "Oh, I loved your Holland story about the boy with his finger in

the dike." I remarked, "Well, sister, that was not exactly the subject of my talk; I was talking about saving souls." But she went on to say, "You know, I heard that story for the first time when I was still in school, and I am so pleased you told it again."

Brothers and sisters, I have learned not to argue, especially with sisters. So I left this sister with a smile and went on my way, a sadder but wiser man. I had apparently failed to teach so that no one misunderstood.

### Modern-day pioneers

Therefore, my challenge today is to do better. I would like to dedicate a few words of appreciation to the modern-day pioneers who are laboring in the smallest of branches in newly opened missions of the Church.

Especially in places where the membership is still too small to make the many programs of the Church work as the Lord intended, for the edifying of the Saints and for the establishing of Zion.

I also would like to pay tribute to the couples who labor in faraway places as representatives of the International Mission. Some of them are in their seventies and are now serving their third mission!

I am also full of praise for the dedication and endurance I have witnessed in Asia, shown by the deacon in Tien Mu, Taiwan, the newly ordained elder in Bacolod in the Philippines, the Relief Society sister in Solo, Indonesia, the Primary president in Khorat, Thailand; and let there be no misunderstanding: I honor all those who labor in similar places and callings all over the world. May the richest blessings of our Heavenly Father always be with these modern-day pioneers.

### Growing need for gospel

What a tremendous work still lies ahead of us, for I have observed that in the merry-go-round world of daily liv-

ing there is a growing need for the peace and tranquillity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This church, which bears his name and which was restored to the earth by the Prophet Joseph Smith, can provide people of every nation and tongue with that peace.

I testify that the priesthood of God has been restored to the earth and that a daily growing number of priesthood holders are willing to serve as co-servants of the Lord. With this Priesthood we serve best when we serve those who need us most!

There is a deliberate purpose for every soul to be here on the earth, and our Father in Heaven has sent his word to reveal that expressed purpose and to guide all mankind in joyously fulfilling that conscious design. But, alas, there are many who reject the instructions, the revelations, and the guidance and prefer to stumble on in the darkness of their own reasonings.

### Parables of Jesus Christ

And there are also many who have the feeling that the whole world is against them. Sometimes this is indeed true; and they had better find out why, because they will then discover their own shortcomings and what ways there are to improve themselves. The Lord does not ask whether a person comes to his church from prison or from a successful and respectable background. He accepts a soul, not his history! And then a door opens and that person starts to progress, learning line upon line, precept upon precept, through example and through the scriptures like the beautiful parables of Jesus Christ.

Let us read them often, these traditional classroom illustrations, of which the British poet Thomas T. Lynch said:

*He spoke of grass and wind and rain,  
Of fig trees and fair weather;  
And made it his delight, to bring  
Heaven and earth together.*

*He spoke of lilies, corn and vines,  
The sparrow and the raven;  
And words so natural, yet so wise,  
Were on men's hearts engraven.*

*He spoke of yeast and bread, of flax and  
cloth,*

*Of eggs and fish and candles—  
See, how the whole familiar world  
He most divinely handles.*

The social background of the life of Jesus Christ is wonderfully reflected in the parables. They take us back to the first century A.D. In my vivid imagination, when reading the parables I enter that home and watch the housewife making the bread or patching the old garment or looking for the lost coin. I see the bustle of the marketplace and watch the travelers on the road. I work the fields with the sower, I climb the hills with the shepherd, or stand by the lakeside and help the fishermen to pull the net ashore.

I become acquainted with the local merchant, his large house, his vineyard, and his barns. I learn how he deals with his steward and his laborers, and I am fascinated by it. Nothing of the life in the busy province of Galilee seems to escape the Master. His greatest interest was always in the common people.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I have a desire to be the Lord's humble servant in this dispensation. He lives. The same Jesus is the head of this church.

### **Blueprint for progress**

I am a convert to this church. I received the light through the missionaries, and I know there are two important forces that can carry light to all corners of the world—the sun in the heavens and the mission organization of this church. I see this miracle happen every day while traveling in the missions of the area to which I have been assigned. What is required is organized

teamwork. Let us remember this when we, as a team, build branches and districts, wards and stakes, priesthood quorums, and auxiliary organizations in our Father's kingdom here on earth, and always keep in mind the words often quoted by President Harold B. Lee: "There is no limit to the good that you can do, if you don't care who gets the credit" (see Antoine R. Ivins, in Conference Report, Apr. 1946, p. 42). The need of the hour is true discipleship in the Lord's restored church.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is on the move worldwide, and the missionary program is the inspired blueprint for progress.

### **Making people happy**

Therefore, let us go forward with great determination, in a spirit of love and unity. That is our best source of motivation—to do the work with all our might, mind, and strength, and make people really happy.

In the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament we read: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Prov. 29:18).

I know with all my heart that this is true. I testify that the purpose of the restored gospel is to create happy families in this life and in the life to come.

That we all may come to a perfect understanding of this divine purpose is my humble prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Marion G. Romney**

Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder L. Tom Perry

"And it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him. . . .

"And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord. . . .

"And he gave unto them commandments, . . .

"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters." (Moses 5:1, 4-5, 12.)

### Looking after one another

The Lord, from the very beginning, has taught his children of their obligation and responsibility to look after one another. In the days of Adam and the early fathers, it was generally the eldest father who was called upon to exercise his patriarchal responsibility to watch over the families. As the children of the Lord increased in number, the principle of watching over the church by the priesthood was the Lord's way of seeing that the fathers did their duty, as well as assisting them in that responsibility.

A study of the history of mankind will reveal that every time the Lord has established his church on the earth, one of its distinguishing characteristics has been a system to watch over and strengthen the membership.

### Procedure in Moses' day

Moses, after being given the awesome responsibility of leading the children of Israel out of bondage, was taught this principle by his father-in-law.

"And it came to pass on the morning, that Moses sat to judge the people:

and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening.

"And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?

"And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God. . . .

"And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good.

"Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: . . .

"Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee. . . .

"So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said.

"And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." (Exod. 18:13-15, 17-19, 24-25.)

### Organization in Savior's day

When the Savior was on the earth, the numbers grew who followed Him. He established an organization to teach and care for their needs. First He called twelve; then as the work expanded, we find the scriptures recording: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:1-2.)

As His work continued to expand, we find more of His organization being put into place: "And he gave some,

apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:11-14.)

### "... to watch over the church"

Through the ages the process of watching over the church has become a priesthood assignment and responsibility. One would expect, therefore, to find in the restoration of the gospel in this day, that this principle, "to watch over," would be clearly evident as one of the basic programs of the Church. In the revelation on Church organization and government given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, April 1830, this principle was again established. This revelation instructs:

"The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them;

"And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking;

"And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty.

"They are, however, to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ." (D&C 20:53-55, 59.)

### Visit to Prophet's home

There is a choice account of how this practice was carried out in the early days of the Church. History has re-

corded the testimony of Elder William Farrington Cahoon, as he filled his assignment as a teacher to the home of the Prophet Joseph Smith. The account is as follows:

"Before I close my testimony. . . , I wish to mention one circumstance which I never shall forget: I was called and ordained to act as a teacher to visit the families of the Saints. I got along very well till I found that I was obliged to call and pay a visit to the Prophet. Being young [only about seventeen years of age], I felt my weakness in visiting the Prophet and his family in the capacity of a teacher. I almost felt like shrinking from duty. Finally I went to his door and knocked, and in a minute the Prophet came to the door. I stood there trembling, and said to him:

"'Brother Joseph, I have come to visit you in the capacity of a teacher, if it is convenient for you.'

"He said 'Brother William, come right in, I am glad to see you; sit down in that chair there and I will go and call my family in.'

"They soon came in and took seats. He then said, 'Brother William, I submit myself and family into your hands,' and then took his seat. 'Now Brother William,' said he 'ask all the questions you feel like.'

"By this time all my fears and trembling had ceased, and I said, 'Brother Joseph, are you trying to live your religion?'

"He answered 'Yes.'

"I then said 'Do you pray in your family?'

"He said 'Yes.'

"'Do you teach your family the principles of the gospel?'

"He replied 'Yes, I am trying to do it.'

"'Do you ask a blessing on your food?'

"He answered 'Yes.'

"'Are you trying to live in peace and harmony with all your family?'

"He said that he was.

"I then turned to Sister Emma, his wife, and said 'Sister Emma, are you

trying to live your religion? Do you teach your children to obey their parents? Do you try to teach them to pray?"

"To all these questions she answered 'Yes, I am trying to do so.'

"I then turned to Joseph and said, 'I am now through with my questions as a teacher; and now if you have any instructions to give, I shall be happy to receive them.'

"He said 'God bless you, Brother William; and if you are humble and faithful, you shall have power to settle all difficulties that may come before you in the capacity of a teacher.'

"I then left my parting blessing upon him and his family, as a teacher, and took my departure." (*Juvenile Instructor*, 27 (15 Aug. 1892): 492-93.)

### Home Teaching program

Beginning with father Adam down to the present when the Lord's church has been organized on the earth, there has been a system, a program to have brotherly and sisterly concern one for another. The history of these general conferences is filled with discourses from the Brethren reminding us of this sacred obligation. I have been impressed to add my voice to that record today with the hope that we can be motivated to place the calling of home teachers in its proper priority in our lives. Let me remind you of three essential ingredients for a successful home teaching program.

First, the family is the basic unit in the Church organization. The home teacher is the first line of defense to watch over and strengthen that basic unit. In our priority of time commitments we ought to first watch over and strengthen our own families, and then be good, consistent, conscientious home teachers.

President Joseph F. Smith said in the general conference of April 1915: "I don't know of any duty that is more sacred, or more necessary, if it is carried out as it should be, than the duties of the teachers who visit the homes of the

people, who pray with them, who admonish them to virtue and honor, to unity, to love, and to faith in and fidelity to the cause of Zion." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1915, p. 140.)

Home teachers, it is your responsibility to see that the unbaptized are baptized, the unordained are ordained, the inactive are brought into activity, the lost members are found.

Second, just as Moses was not able to care for the needs of all the children of Israel alone, so a home teacher should not be given a workload beyond his ability to perform. The history of ward teaching and home teaching has witnessed a change in the recommended number of families assigned to a teacher, being reduced from ten to eight to the present level of five or fewer as the Church has enlarged its borders and the distance to travel for visits has increased. Nothing will destroy the spirit of a home teacher more than to give him an assignment beyond his ability to have the thrill of success in his performance. Stake presidents, bishops, and quorum leaders, there is no program in the Church which will give you greater relief from the administrative burdens you carry than having a well-organized, efficiently operated, successful home teaching program.

Third, the preparation of a home teacher. Elder Matthias F. Cowley reported in the general conference of April 1902 that "the teachers who go out to visit the saints from family to family ought to be men endowed with the spirit of revelation from God. They ought to study the principles of the Gospel, and to so live that they may enjoy the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in their instructions, so that their instructions may be understood and be attractive to the children; that they should not go simply to carry out a routine, to ask certain questions, just to be able to say that they have made their monthly visit. They ought to be men inspired with the spirit of revelation from God, that they may touch the hearts of the families." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1902, p.38.)

If our home teaching assignments are to be given their proper priority, then our preparation for those visits must be careful and complete, tailored to the individual needs of fathers and mothers and their families. As home teachers, should not this basic program receive our earnest effort to seek inspiration and guidance of the Lord in this most sacred obligation?

God grant us the vision to see the potential of our home teaching assignments, and the desire to do his will to watch over and strengthen those whom we have been called to serve with a special spirit of interest, concern, and love, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Marion G. Romney**

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Kimball's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this General Conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the members of the Tabernacle Choir and the Mormon Youth Chorus for providing us the beautiful and inspiring music heard at this Conference. We are thankful to their conductors and organists.

We thank all who have contributed in various ways to the success and inspiration of this Conference, especially the General Authorities who have given such appropriate and inspiring messages.

We appreciate the attention given by local and national press representatives and by representatives of radio and television in reporting the sessions of this Conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this Conference; the city traffic officers for courteously and efficiently handling the increased traffic; the fire department and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses, who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference.

We are grateful to the Tabernacle ushers for seating the great audiences of these Conference sessions in such a courteous manner.

We again express appreciation to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations who have given public service time to carry sessions of this Conference in the United States, Mexico, Central America and Canada; by satellite to Australia and South America; and by short-wave to Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

We thank the interpreters who have provided translation for the sessions of the Conference.

Our beloved Prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be our concluding speaker of the Conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing, "Behold, This Is the Way."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is Supervisor of the Hawaii-Pacific Isles area.

This Conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

## **President Spencer W. Kimball**

My dear brothers and sisters, we came together to wait upon the Lord, to be cleansed and edified by his Spirit, and to know in our hearts the spirit of true worship.

We have not been disappointed. The Lord has been with us by the power of his Spirit, and it has been good for us to be here.

I hope we will go forth now, believ-

ing the doctrines that have been preached, taking the counsels of the Brethren, and basking in the same spirit that has uplifted and edified us while here.

Let us conclude in a tone of testimony and in the spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving to him whose we are, who has given us all that we have, and in whose work we are engaged.

### Paul's testimony

Our beloved brother Paul, after acknowledging "that Christ died for our sins . . .

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," then said:

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 19).

Then he taught and testified that even as Christ is risen from the dead, so will all men come forth from the grave; each will then be judged according to his works, and each will receive his appointed place in the mansions which are prepared.

In that resurrected state, Paul said, there are "celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, and bodies testial; but the glory of the celestial, one; and the terrestrial, another; and the testial, another" (Inspired Version, 1 Cor. 15:40).

### A practical religion

Now this system of revealed religion which has come to us by revelation is a very practical religion. It deals with flocks and herds and properties; it teaches us how to get along with each other here and now; it is a way of life that turns a dreary and drab mortal existence into a glorious and exhilarating experience.

### An eternal plan

But it is much more than this. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the eternal plan of salvation. It is the plan devised and

announced by God, the Eternal Father, for the salvation of all who will believe and obey.

We are eternal beings. We have no way of comprehending how long we dwell in the presence of God as his spirit children. We are here in mortality for a moment of testing and trial. Then we will come forth in the resurrection, receive an inheritance in whatever kingdom we deserve, and go on living the commandments to all eternity.

This life consists of a brief yesterday, a few short hours of today, and a few moments tomorrow. The oldest men among us scarcely live longer than a hundred years. But the life that is to be is forever. It will have no end. Men will rise from the grave and not die after. Life is eternal, unending; never after the resurrection will the children of our Father taste death.

We have a hope in Christ here and now. He died for our sins. Because of him and his gospel, our sins are washed away in the waters of baptism; sin and iniquity are burned out of our souls as though by fire; and we become clean, have clear consciences, and gain that peace which passeth understanding. (See Phil. 4:7.)

By living the laws of his gospel, we gain temporal prosperity and maintain health of body and strength of mind. The gospel blesses us today.

But today is just a grain of sand in the Sahara of eternity. We have also a hope in Christ for the eternity that lies ahead; otherwise, as Paul said, we would be "of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

### Hope of eternal life

How great would be our sorrow—and justly so—if there were no resurrection! How miserable we would be if there were no hope of life eternal! If our hope of salvation and eternal reward should fade away, we would certainly be more miserable than those who never had such an expectancy.

"But now is Christ risen from the



dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

Now the effects of his resurrection shall pass upon all men, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

Now "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49).

Now provision has been made whereby "this corruptible shall . . . put on incorruption, and this mortal shall . . . put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

### The bar of judgment

Then shall all men stand before the bar of the great Jehovah to be judged according to the deeds done in the flesh.

Those who have lived after the manner of the world shall go to a celestial kingdom whose glory is as the stars.

Those who have been decent and upright and who have lived respectable and good lives will go to a terrestrial kingdom whose glory is as the moon.

Those who have believed in Christ, who have forsaken the world, who have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide and been willing to lay their all on the altar, those who have kept the commandments of God—they shall go to a celestial kingdom whose glory is as the sun.

### Victory through Jesus

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Paul asks, (1 Cor. 15:55).

There is no victory in the grave, for death is replaced with life. Immortality is a free gift for all men through the atoning ransom paid by the Son of God.

But, Paul says, "The sting of death is sin," meaning that if men die in their sins, they will suffer the prescribed penalty and gain a lesser glory in the realms ahead (1 Cor. 15:56).

"But thanks be to God," the ancient apostle continues, "which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

If we are true and faithful, we shall rise, not alone in immortality but unto eternal life. Immortality is to live forever in an assigned kingdom. Eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven and live in the family unit.

And so Paul exhorts the Saints:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13.)

### Eternal hope in Christ

We have an eternal hope in Christ. We know this life is given us to prepare for eternity, "and that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy" (D&C 130:2).

We believe, and it is our testimony, and we proclaim it to the world "that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:17).

We know, and it is our testimony, and we also proclaim it to the world that to be saved men must "believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:18).

Thus, with Nephi, "we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

"And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we

prophecy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins." (2 Ne. 25:23, 26; italics added.)

Also, with Nephi, we know the course all men must pursue to gain an eternal hope.

"The right way," he said, "is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out" (2 Ne. 25:29).

### Glory in Paul's words

We glory with Paul in these words spoken of our beloved Lord: in him "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." (Col. 1:14-19.)

And again with Paul we say:

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye

have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:9-12.)

### Testimony of Peter

Now, relive with me this beautiful testimony of Peter:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:13-18.)

To the testimonies of these mighty men and apostles of old—our brethren in the ministry of the same Master—I add my own testimony. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

He is my friend, my Savior, my Lord, my God.

With all my heart I pray that the Saints may keep his commandments, have his Spirit, and gain an eternal inheritance with him in celestial glory.

### Love and gratitude

My beloved brethren and sisters, as we come to the final moments of these glorious two days together, my heart goes out to you in love and gratitude. Everywhere I go, there is a great out-

pouring of love and kindness, and for that I am humbly thankful. It is manna to my soul. Your prayers and your love sustain me. The Lord hears your prayers and blesses me and my Brethren with health and strength and directs us in the affairs of his kingdom here upon the earth. For this all of us are deeply grateful.

In return, I extend to you my love and grateful thanks. As you return to your wards and stakes, your missions, and to your individual homes around the world, I pray our Heavenly Father to bless you and your families. Let the messages and spirit of this conference radiate and find expression in all that you do henceforth—in your homes, in

your work, in your meetings, and in all your comings and goings. Let us be better Latter-day Saints now than we have ever been before. I pray the Lord to bless you; and as his servant, I bless you and bid you a fond farewell.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang, "Behold, This Is the Way."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu pronounced the benediction.

The Conference was adjourned for six months.

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## GENERAL WELFARE SESSION SATURDAY MORNING

### GENERAL WELFARE SESSION

A Welfare Services Session was held in connection with General Conference on Saturday morning, September 30, 1978, beginning at 7 o'clock. Invited to attend this meeting were General Authorities, regional representatives, stake presidencies, high councilors involved in welfare work, bishopricks, and stake and ward Relief Society presidencies and others responsible for operating welfare production projects.

President Spencer W. Kimball presided at this session and President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted it.

President Tanner opened the meeting with the following remarks:

#### President N. Eldon Tanner

President Spencer W. Kimball presides at all sessions of the Conference and has asked me to conduct this session.

To better help you understand and realize how to achieve personal goals and family preparedness standards, we are carrying on this meeting this morning. We will open by singing, "How Firm A Foundation," with Brother Donald Ripplinger conducting and Brother Roy Darley at the organ. The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter.

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The congregation sang, "How Firm A Foundation."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter offered the invocation.

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#### President Tanner

Our beloved President, President Spencer W. Kimball, will be our first speaker.

## President Spencer W. Kimball

My beloved brethren and sisters, I greet you at this harvest time with the earnest hope that we follow the counsel of the Lord to have our *house in order regarding welfare services*.

By *house*, I mean both our individual households and the wards, branches, stakes, and missions which we preside over.

I have some concern that we may not fully be following through on our commitments and obligations to do as the Lord has instructed and warned us.

Our houses can be in order by planned, consistent, and timely application of basic welfare principles and programs.

Welfare services is the full program the Lord has provided us—provident living, personal and family preparedness, home and visiting teaching, producing and distributing goods to the poor, rehabilitating members with especially difficult needs or handicaps, securing jobs for the unemployed, restoring emotionally disturbed souls to full activity in the Church and society, with all of us consecrating our lives to the building up of the kingdom of God on earth.

We have been attempting to get our welfare services house in order for forty-two years. We have come a long way, but there remains much to be done. In many parts of the Church, stakes and wards are just getting underway in implementing their welfare services. To them we say: Do things in order and the Lord will prosper you. In other parts of the Church, welfare services is flourishing. But regardless of whether, in your particular stake, you are just beginning or have fully implemented the system, I feel it timely to talk about *the fruit of our welfare labors*.

May I suggest that the "fruit of our welfare labors" may best be understood on three separate, yet related, levels. *First* is that of the *individual*; *second* is

that of the *family*; and *third* is that of the *Church* as a whole.

### Individual Fruits

The fruits experienced by the individual include dignity, self-respect, strengthened testimony, selflessness, and increased personal spirituality. Explaining the intended outcomes of the welfare plan, President J. Reuben Clark had this to say to a special meeting of stake presidents held here in the Tabernacle on 2 October 1936:

"Thus it is seen that from the beginning the real long term objective of the welfare plan is *the building of character* in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep in the inside of them, and *bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit*, which after all is the mission and purpose and reason for being of this Church."

The primary fruit of welfare service is achieved in the lives of individuals. Only when achieved individually can it have its intended influence on family units and the whole body of the Church. Just as each individual's testimony adds to the strength of the Church, so also does the individual labor of each member comprise the power of unified welfare services.

You may ask, "How do I secure these blessings and what seeds must I sow in order to reap the fruits thereof?" I believe they are found in personal, daily application of the six foundational principles of welfare services: love, service, work, self-reliance, consecration, and stewardship. The entire welfare activity structure, and for that matter the full program of the Church, provides ample opportunity for application of these principles.

We have said that *welfare services is the gospel in action*. This implies that we achieve the fruits of welfare service not

just by knowing these six principles and related gospel doctrine, but by doing, working, and putting into practice what we have been taught.

Often, however, some seek the fruits without the planting. In faith, we plant the seed, and soon we see the miracle of the blossoming. Men have often misunderstood and have reversed the process. They would have the harvest before the planting.

I believe we find a great lesson in this regard in the parable of the vineyard found in the fifth chapter of Jacob in the Book of Mormon. After laboring long and hard to bring forth "much fruit" from his olive trees, but with little success, the lord of the vineyards is discouraged and asks:

"But what could I have done more in my vineyard? Have I slackened mine hand, that I have not nourished it? Nay, I have nourished it, and I have digged about it, and I have pruned it, and I have dunged it; and I have stretched forth mine hand almost all the day long, and the end draweth nigh. And it grieveth me that I should hew down all the trees of my vineyard, and cast them into the fire that they should be burned. Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?"

"And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: *Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard—have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good?* And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, *behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots*, taking strength unto themselves. Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted?" (Jacob 5:47-48; italics added.)

It seems that some among us have this same problem; they want bountiful harvests—both spiritual and temporal—without developing the root system that will yield them. There are far too few who are willing to pay the price, in discipline and work, to cultivate hardy roots. Such cultivation should begin in

our youth. Little did I know as a boy that daily chores in the garden, feeding the cattle, carrying the water, chopping the wood, mending fences, and all the labor of a small farm was an important part of sending down roots, before being called on to send out branches. I'm so grateful that my parents understood the relationship between roots and branches. Let us each cultivate deep roots, so that we may secure the desired fruits of our welfare labors.

### Family Fruits

At the family level, the fruits of our welfare work are many. *They include peace, love, harmony, solidarity, and contentment.*

A true Latter-day Saint family is a haven against the storms and struggles of life.

Inspired men have long taught that the home is the cradle of civilization and the foundation of society. But the Lord, through his prophets, teaches us much more than this, for we know that it is exalted families that will make up the divine patriarchal order which will be the source of kingdoms and glory for the faithful in eternity.

What are the seeds that must be planted in the home in order for the family to achieve these fruits of peace, love, and harmony? From a welfare services point of view, they may best be summarized in the *standards* of personal preparedness. These *standards* have been distributed throughout the Church. I hope we will all learn and follow them.

Every day I review scores of letters from members of the Church. They are writing for counsel regarding a myriad of personal problems. As I consider these matters, returning most to our local leaders, where they can best be dealt with, I am reminded that most of us have personal and family problems. We all have challenges, heartaches, and experience success and failures. It is from these that we grow, gain strength and experience while in mortality. But

when they take on serious proportions, it sometimes means we have not been fully obedient to counsel—both that of the Lord through his Spirit and that of our appointed leaders. Let us practice the principles of personal and family preparedness in our daily lives. “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).

### Church Fruits

When we practice the precepts, doctrines, and programs of welfare services, the fruit of our labors is the building of Zion.

The Lord declared: “For Zion *must* increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders *must* be enlarged; her stakes *must* be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion *must* arise and put on her beautiful garments.” (D&C 82:14; italics added). Zion consists of the pure in heart—those who are sanctified and whose garments are washed white through the blood of the Lamb (see Alma 13:11). These are they who take charity as a mantle and serve others out of a pure heart.

We are building up the strength of Zion—her cords or stakes—throughout the world. Therefore, we counsel our people to remain in their native lands and gather out the elect of God and teach them the ways of the Lord. There temples are being built and the saints will be blessed wherever they live in all the world.

The Lord revealed his new and everlasting covenant to prepare a people to meet him at his second coming. Very important among the principles and doctrines required of us to build up Zion are those which underlie welfare services. For we must be “united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom; And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself” (D&C 105:4-5). It is our present opportunity and responsi-

bility to give, nurture, and work to bring forth the final fruits of welfare services, shown in vision to Enoch and recorded in the Book of Moses:

“And righteousness will I send down out of Heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem” (Moses 7:62).

It is my plea that we may keep our houses in order, individually and collectively, and prepare to receive the fruits of the gospel—even a fulness of joy.

I want now to introduce Sister Barbara Smith. I would like to ask Sister Smith to come forward and share with you the background on an action approved by the first Presidency relative to Church wheat reserves.

### Sister Barbara B. Smith

Thank you, President Kimball. On an autumn day in 1876, President Brigham Young called to his office one of my predecessors, Sister Emmeline B. Wells, then the associate editor of the *Woman's Exponent*. He told her he wanted the women of Zion to begin to save grain against a day of need and that he wanted her to lead out in this mission. (See *History of Relief Society, 1842-1966*, Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1966, p. 109.)

Sister Wells said, “We began that very year, and though we were laughed at, we did buy grain” (*Relief Society Magazine*, Feb. 1915, p. 48). “Sisters be in earnest,” she admonished, and the

women responded in spirit and deed (*Woman's Exponent*, 15 Oct. 1876, p. 76).

When they had no money to buy wheat, the women went into the fields and gleaned it. They saved their "Sunday eggs" and bartered or sold them in exchange for wheat. They made quilts, rag rugs, cheese, and other items, that they traded or sold for wheat.

Through the records of Relief Society we have glimpses of their persistent efforts.

From Cedar City: "Our beloved bishop has granted us room in the tithing office and we have sacked up 160 bushels of wheat. We have other property we intend to turn into grain as soon as opportunity offers." (*Woman's Exponent*, 15 Feb. 1877, p. 138.)

From Mantua, Box Elder County: "We have been trying to carry out the counsel of our beloved President Brigham Young, in storing grain; we have in store one hundred and fifteen bushels of which thirteen were gleaned by the young ladies" (*Woman's Exponent*, 1 Feb. 1878, p. 130).

The wheat stored by those dedicated early women has been used in unexpected ways:

In 1898 Relief Society wheat was sent to the aid of the people of Parowan, Utah, and other districts that were drought-stricken. (See *Relief Society Magazine*, Feb. 1915, p. 58.)

In 1906, when earthquake and fire devastated the city of San Francisco, a carload of flour from Relief Society wheat was sent.

In 1906 another carload of flour was sent to China to relieve suffering from famine.

In 1918 all 200,000 bushels of Relief Society wheat were sold to the United States government to meet the food emergency caused by World War I.

For a number of years, interest on the wheat was used to provide for maternity care, child welfare, and general health care for members of the Church.

And then again in 1940 the Relief Society purchased wheat and stored it in the elevators at Welfare Square. (See *History of Relief Society*, pp. 110-11.)

For more than one hundred years our wheat project has been considered "a sacred trust." By wise investment, the value of this program has increased, until today we have a sizable asset in wheat and funds.

In an early Relief Society publication, a sister wrote her feelings on wheat saving. She said:

"If anyone doubts . . . let her look about her, behold the myriads of little children in the land, and recollect that the women who are now called upon to save the grain, are their MOTHERS.

"... Could I imagine those pure, baby lips . . . asking for BREAD when I had none to give!" (*Woman's Exponent*, 1 Nov. 1876, p. 81.)

As women, we know that even though we give nourishment to children in infancy and childhood, part of our challenge as mothers is to help them mature and take their place in the great plan of life and salvation. In the past, Relief Society women have nourished numerous beginning programs to meet needs, including education and career development programs, hospitals, maternity care, adoption, and other social services and welfare projects. When the projects have matured, Relief Society has been proud to see them move into the larger sphere of Church stewardship.

The Relief Society General Presidency has prayerfully considered the matter of their wheat stewardship and has decided that this responsibility has now been fulfilled. It is time to include the Relief Society wheat in the worldwide Church grain storage program.

We wish to propose that the 266,291 bushels of Relief Society wheat now be made a part of the grain storage plan of Welfare Services for the benefit of all of the members of the Church and that the wheat fund be used exclusively for purchase of grain. This action is unanimously supported by the Relief

Society general board. We have also written to the stakes and the missions recorded as holding wheat certificates as of 1 July 1957 and have received their unanimous support.

With President Kimball's permission, I would like to ask the sisters present in this meeting also to affirm this action. All sisters in favor of joining with us in the decision to include the Relief Society wheat in the worldwide Church grain storage program please signify. Thank you.

It is with great pride in the accomplishments of the past and with tenderness of heart that we, the women of Zion, place our wheat and wheat assets at your disposal, President Kimball, to be used for grain storage purposes under your administration, through the General Church Welfare Committee.

We pray that the Relief Society wheat will continue to be considered a sacred trust. May it bless the lives of all who are its recipients. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President Kimball**

#### **Acceptance of Relief Society Wheat**

Sister Smith, in behalf of the brethren of the Church and the Church in general, we accept this great gift that you have given to us from the Relief Society with gratitude and appreciation for its deep significance. We are conscious of the considerable sacrifice and diligence of the Relief Society sisters, who for over a century have faithfully discharged this sacred wheat trust. We

are confident that the Welfare Services Department, under the direction of the General Welfare Services Committee, which is composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, the Presiding Bishopric, and the Relief Society General Presidency, will continue wheat reserves management in the same fine manner in which it has been operated by the Relief Society in the past. We will see that the Relief Society gift is used, as has been intended, for a time of need to bless the lives of Church members everywhere worldwide.

We are proud of the accomplishments of the women in the past and the present. Now we ask you sisters to continue in your good works and to support the programs of the Church, particularly those of your own organization, the Relief Society.

We ask you also to support the Brethren, and we ask them to support you and to work together as partners and companions in furthering the work of the Lord and your own salvation. Let this gift from the Relief Society today be an example of the cooperative effort and harmony that can enrich our lives in the Church and in the home.

May the Lord bless us in this great and divinely inspired welfare work, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

Bishop Victor L. Brown will now speak to us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, President of the Relief Society.

## **Bishop Victor L. Brown**

My brothers and sisters, this morning I would like to share with you a presentation which dramatically illustrates what can happen when Church leaders and members begin to apply the

basic principles of welfare services in their lives. This is a factual account of the accomplishments of a small branch of the Church in the village of Bermejillo, near Torreón, Mexico.



### Bermejillo branch

Come with me to Bermejillo, a typical village in north central Mexico, with dusty streets and adobe buildings.

Eight years ago a small branch of the Church was established here. Church meetings have been held in one room of this rented building [slide shown], which the members call "the prayer house."

A majority of the men in the branch work in the fields on land assigned to them by the government. Their crops consist mainly of cotton, corn, and beans. Their harvest is sent through a small co-op bank, which in return pays them approximately \$3.00 to \$5.00 a day, hardly enough to take care of only basic needs.

The strength of this small branch rests in the Castañeda family. The mother, her six sons, and one daughter accepted baptism when the gospel was first brought to Bermejillo eight years ago. Since that time, the boys have married and brought their wives into the Church. The family is currently making plans to be sealed in the Arizona Temple.

Julian Castañeda has served as branch president for the past five years and has given direction to the temporal and spiritual affairs of this branch.

### Welfare services missionaries

Since 1975, welfare services missionaries have been visiting Bermejillo on a weekly basis. They teach discussions to the leaders and members on such subjects as personal hygiene and nutrition and serve as a resource to the branch president in welfare services-related matters.

In the years following the welfare services missionaries' arrival, President Castañeda has met frequently with his welfare services committee. Several projects have been undertaken to help members in the areas of personal and family preparedness.

A couple serving as welfare ser-

vices missionaries were asked to assist members in planting family gardens. Seeds were obtained by President Castañeda through community resources and distributed to the members. He took the lead by planting the first garden. Almost all of the members followed his example.

It was soon found that in order to raise a garden, provisions had to be made to keep the pigs from running loose. Pens also had to be constructed for the chickens; it seemed that they were able to scratch out the seeds and young plants faster than they could grow.

### Improvements made

In addition to the gardens, storage also became a part of the program. Members were taught how to dry fruits and vegetables, and canning was done on a small scale. Jams and jellies were made, using appropriate local methods. Part of their year's supply included grains grown in their fields and then stored. They had to learn how to keep them from being infested by insects and rats. Wood which was brought in from the mountains and stored was later used as fuel for cooking as well as for heating water to wash dishes and clean the house.

As cleanliness and sanitation were emphasized, the members began building bathrooms adjacent to their homes. Prior to the project, members in Bermejillo had no bathrooms.

In this small building [slide shown], the first flush toilet in Bermejillo was installed with a septic tank dug in the courtyard to contain the waste. A shower was also built. It consisted of a fifty-gallon drum on the roof which was filled with water in the morning, warmed by the sun during the day, and was ready for a warm shower in the evening.

Gardens and bathrooms became a reality. Dirty, neglected homes with dirt floors and no beds—where cooking was

done inside on open fires of twigs and sticks with no stovepipe or chimney—now have cement floors, cooking stoves with proper ventilation or an outside cooking house, clean tables and chairs, and orderly rooms.

Five years ago most of the buildings in Bermejillo looked about the same, but now, homes of Latter-day Saints have become the show places of the village. They are easily identified by their fresh paint, green trees, and beautiful flowers.

Members in Bermejillo had access to water which was piped from a nearby city but which was unsafe to drink. Boiling the water was too difficult because of the scarcity of fuel. So mothers were taught to purify it by putting three drops of chlorine bleach in each quart of water. Purifying the water has reduced illness due to diarrhea, amoebae, and typhoid fever.

Welfare services missionaries were assigned by the branch president to visit the home of every newly baptized family. In carrying out this assignment, the missionaries often found emergency teaching situations.

For example, one day upon entering the home of a newly baptized member, they were greeted by the mother, who invited them to sit down and then began to cry. Her baby was sick. Its stomach was badly bloated.

Upon investigation, it was found that the child had never had anything to eat except flour and water or powdered milk. For eight months the mother had been afraid to give the baby any other food because it was so sick, and it was sick because it was starving!

The missionaries taught the mother how to include cereals, fruits, and vegetables in the child's diet. Now the child is on the road to normal health.

As the result of projects such as this one in Bermejillo, the death rate among member children in the whole mission has dropped from approximately forty per one hundred to ten per one hundred.

## Members assist each other

Other personal and family preparedness projects were also carried out, including one planned to help an inactive family clean up their home, which President Kimball has asked all of us to do.

This eight-member family lived in a little ten-by-twelve-foot, one-room home with a dirt floor, two double beds, a small table, and a small kerosene stove. There was neither electricity nor running water.

The branch welfare services committee organized to solve the problem. The Relief Society sisters carried many buckets of water to clean the house. They helped the family take the furniture outside in the sun and remove the accumulations of years.

Home teachers and other priesthood brethren assisted in the repairing of the furniture.

The welfare services missionaries participated by giving lessons on cleanliness and personal hygiene.

Another way the missionaries were of assistance to the branch was through presentations of special lessons, such as baby care, to the Relief Society sisters. They have taught principles and techniques in family health care. The sisters have now learned to make their own clothing and to use sound judgment in shopping.

These activities have increased the sisters' love for Relief Society, and now, for the first time, regular visiting teaching has become a reality.

The children have also benefitted from the personal and family preparedness projects in Bermejillo. The mothers now make sure the children are well groomed before sending them to Primary.

Older children are developing teaching skills as they help younger children learn the lessons of the gospel.

## Power of example

The missionaries have found that

just by being an example to the children they teach them important principles. Children have learned of President Kimball's counsel about saving money for their missions. They also now spend any of their extra pesos on fruit rather than candy.

Nonmembers have been influenced by the example of members in Bermejillo, and a number have been taught the gospel.

As the branch grew, the rented facilities became too small for them. So President Castañeda obtained permission for the use of this plot of land [slide shown], upon which to build a chapel. Other branches in the mission had met with extreme difficulty in obtaining such permission, but the village officials in Bermejillo were aware of the accomplishments of the branch and were pleased at the prospect of having a chapel built here.

A small, temporary, adobe chapel has been erected on the property and is now serving while the Saints raise their share of the funds for their new meeting place, which they have been authorized to build.

Much of their portion of the money is being earned through branch projects. Every Tuesday and Thursday the Relief Society sisters divide into small groups to make doughnuts and tamales. They then sell them in the parks or door-to-door. One of the sisters reported how difficult it was to sell door-to-door, but she said, "We want our chapel, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to earn enough money."

To date they have met all their commitments, and the construction of a chapel on this site is scheduled to begin before the end of this year.

What we have just reviewed is a marvelous example of what can take place in any Church unit, regardless of circumstances, when the leaders and members begin to understand fully and live the basic principles of welfare services. In four short years, look what these Saints have accomplished. They have begun to raise gardens and store their

produce, paint their homes, plant trees and flowers, build toilet and shower units, clean and fix up the interiors and exteriors of their homes, purify their water, properly prepare their food, and provide more nutritious diets for their children.

### **Increased spirituality**

Beyond this, the members have extended the hand of fellowship by helping inactive families solve their temporal problems, by friendshiping nonmembers, and by setting a good example of Latter-day Saint living.

The spirituality of this branch has been enhanced through increased member activity, better preparation by class instructors, more effective home and visiting teachers, additional converts to the Church, branch projects, and personal sacrifice. It is interesting to note that there has been more than a tenfold increase in the per capita fast offering donations from this small branch over the past four years.

The principles of love, service, work, self-reliance, consecration, and stewardship are all evident in the accomplishments of the branch in Bermejillo. Indeed, these members are well on their way to establishing the ideal of Zion.

I am persuaded that any ward or stake in the Church can experience the same kind of success as the branch in Bermejillo. It will come as a result of organizing welfare services committees and of teaching and living the basic principles of welfare services. Many wards and stakes have their own resource people to call on, but where local resource people are not available, welfare services missionaries may be called through proper channels to assist Church units in emerging areas where temporal problems are critical.

May each of us catch the vision of welfare services as these Saints have in Bermejillo. By working together we can fully establish the latter-day Zion. That we may do this, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Sister Barbara B. Smith

Robert Browning's joyful line, "God's in his heaven—all's right with the world!" (*Pippa Passes: A Drama*, part 1, lines 227-28), is more easily expressed when our body is functioning at its optimum—a blessing we all earnestly desire.

### Good health

The state of our health affects every facet of our life—our feeling of personal well-being, our approach to work, our social interactions—even our service to the Lord.

Physical ills are a reality of life, but in spite of them the scriptures declare, "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:25). The Lord has affirmed this statement by providing us with revealed instructions concerning our health, which, if followed, will increase both the length of our life and our joy in it.

Among the most familiar of the health scriptures is the eighty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Lord specifies both substances that are for our use and those which are detrimental to us.

Scientific research has verified the harmful effects of tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol—even upon the development of an unborn child.

We have been warned both by our prophets and by science of the dangers in the improper and indiscriminate use of drugs, including "over-the-counter drugs." Helpful as these remedies are in times of illness, some contain ingredients that if used to excess or in combination with other substances can have dangerous side effects—even dependency or addiction.

### Word of Wisdom

A large portion of the Word of Wisdom is devoted specifically to the wholesome foods that are "ordained for . . . [the] use of man" (D&C 89:10).

Relief Society miniclasses can teach women how to prepare and serve wholesome food in appealing ways.

A friend of mine once told me that after she had served a dinner featuring vegetables, a young guest said, "I thought I didn't like spinach, but that creamed spinach was delicious!" Like many of us, my friend took seriously President Kimball's counsel to garden. Now she grows her own vegetables. She prepares and serves them with great culinary skill. Guests leave her table with increased appreciation for good, healthful foods.

The Lord promises that if we keep these commandments we "shall *run* and not be weary, and shall *walk* and not faint" (D&C 89:20; italics added).

The Lord *might* be making us aware of another law of health—the need of proper exercise. Exercise such as walking and running and other forms of rhythmic action is important in maintaining cardiovascular fitness.

In our busy lives sometimes we are prone to excuse ourselves for not getting proper exercise by saying that we have neither the time nor opportunity. I know a busy young woman who exercises while listening to self-improvement tapes or memorizing scriptures. Almost anyone can do that.

We are also counseled to retire early, that we may not be weary and arise early that our bodies and minds may be invigorated (see D&C 88:124).

In that same passage we are reminded to "cease to be unclean" (D&C 88:124). This should be applied to our bodies, to our homes, and to our neighborhoods. For example, we should have clean hands and clean surfaces where foods are prepared and served.

In the fifty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states that the foods of the earth are "to be used, with judgment, not to excess" (D&C 59:20). Health experts say that obesity constitutes a major health prob-

lem. Being overweight increases the risk of many diseases and creates physical discomfort as well as psychological burdens.

We should be grateful that scientific research and medical practice have resulted in longer life spans, greater health and vitality, and reduction in deaths among babies and small children. One of the touching parts of our past history is the great longing mothers and fathers felt for something to help their sick children get well.

Today, immunization against disease is a great blessing. Some of the most hazardous diseases are now almost totally under control because of immunization.

Home nursing courses, first aid, and other home health skills are taught in Relief Society.

In this day of high medical costs, it would also be helpful if women are taught the value of good medical health insurance. This is essential for both physical health and financial management.

### Physical health goals

In summary, our physical health goals should be—

1. To obey the Word of Wisdom;
2. To maintain proper weight and endurance through regular exercise, adequate rest, and a balanced diet;
3. To improve or maintain personal and home sanitation;
4. To practice preventative measures to preserve good health;
5. To learn and practice home health skills.

May the application of these principles help each of us live joyously, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will now speak to us. After he is finished, we would like all to stand and join in singing, "Do What Is Right," led by Brother Donald Ripplinger.

## Bishop J. Richard Clarke

Brothers and sisters, I am so thankful to be involved in the great welfare plan of the Church. I testify from the depths of my soul that this great movement was revealed by Almighty God to his latter-day prophets.

We have come a long way since the early days of welfare, but we have an enormous distance yet to travel. With the great expansion of missionary work throughout the earth, the ministering to temporal needs will likewise expand. To meet this magnificent challenge successfully, we must be wise and faithful stewards.

### Stewardship

Modern scripture reminds us that

all things belong to the Lord. He declared, "I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine, . . . all these properties. . . .

"And if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards." (D&C 104:14, 55-56.)

The lessons of stewardship are vividly taught in the parable of the talents (see Matt. 25:14-30). To be profitable servants, we must improve that which the Lord has entrusted to us. Stewards are managers, and sound management reduces waste and ensures an appropriate return on invested resources. How happy were the servants who could report to their lord that they had done all that was expected of them and were

told, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matt. 25:21).

I believe there are three elements which characterize successful stewardship—agency, diligence, and accountability. We are free to accept or reject the invitation to serve, but once we accept, we assume full responsibility for the results. In section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read, "O ye that embark in the service of God [I see this as the invitation], see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength" (D&C 4:2). And then, in section 72: "It is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity" (D&C 72:3). While we are ultimately accountable to the Lord, we are also accountable to his mortal priesthood administrators.

### Planning

Let us now focus more specifically on how we may fulfill our stewardship responsibilities within the Storehouse Resource System:

First is the process of planning. Planning makes it possible to control and maximize our resources. Lack of proper planning results in frustration. Most of us have learned that trial-and-error management is wasteful and discouraging. So that eventually each area or zone will be self-sustaining, we are selectively introducing master planning throughout the Church. Welfare master planning is the process of identifying needs and programming resources to meet those needs. When the master plan is fully implemented, our bishops will be able to assist the needy more adequately under changing economic conditions.

### Efficiency

Second, a good steward operates efficiently. Two years ago, President Kimball said:

"Let us become efficient in our production operations, so that we don't merely go through the motions of having welfare farms. The time will come when we will need all the products and more from our projects—even more than we do now.

"Do what you can to make our projects economically viable, so that we don't rationalize that the welfare project is good simply . . . for the priesthood to labor side by side; we can have the brotherhood of labor and the economic efficiency too." (ENSIGN, May 1976, pp. 125-26.)

Addressing a welfare conference in 1960, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., counseled:

"It is my humble judgment today that it would be better for us never to have acquired a welfare project than to fail to take care of it now that we have it. The Lord will not hold us blameless, those of us who lead in the wards and the stakes, . . . if we take of the funds of the people, those sacred trust funds, and purchase projects and then do not utilize those projects as the Lord would have us." (Welfare agricultural meeting, 4 Apr. 1960.)

It is a sobering responsibility to administer these sacred funds at Church headquarters. When we receive an application for a loan or Church participation, we review financial statements and projections very carefully. We critically assess the organizational structure, the management, and the local priesthood involvement with each project. The application forms tell us much about the quality of the stewards operating the project.

### Quality control

Third, let us improve our quality control. Good quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention and sincere effort. We commend you who are following the prescribed standards and procedures to assure that our storehouse commodities are pure and nutritional. President Kimball put

quality control in perspective recently at the groundbreaking of a new cannery. He said, "[We should] be pleased to serve a meal of our products to the Lord, were it . . . our privilege to have him visit any one of our storehouses." The phrase "good enough for welfare" must take on new meaning. Nothing less than our very best is acceptable to the Lord. The *Deseret* label should stand for highest quality because behind that label are the labors of love.

Whether in services or produced goods, by management or volunteer workers, quality control applies to every aspect of welfare services. The quality of commodities received into the storehouse is the final measurement of our production efficiency.

### Safety

Fourth, closely associated with quality control is safety. I am glad to say that our safety record is improving, but there are still too many accidents occurring in some of our units. The cost in human terms is tragic. In dollars, in labor losses, and fire losses it totals several hundred thousand dollars each year.

We would like to remind you that the Church is primarily self-insuring. This means that when carelessness results in replaceable loss, we are forced to draw upon the sacred funds of the Church to restore that which has been damaged or lost. A handbook has been prepared to outline the safety procedures for all that is done in the Storehouse Resource System. Will you study its contents carefully and apply them consistently? Remember, most accidents are preventable.

### Preventive maintenance

Fifth, a good steward will follow preventive maintenance. He will see that every building is well constructed and annually inspected and that all equipment is regularly inspected and serviced. He will extend the life of every

capital asset through wise management. I have a sign in my office which reads: "Why is there always enough time to do things over, but never enough time to do it right?" Preventive maintenance allows us to do it right the first time.

### Accounting & financial priorities

Sixth, a wise steward maintains good accounting records and follows sound financial practices. We are upgrading our accounting data system to provide you and us with better information. We appreciate your patience and assistance in implementing this new system. As you know, sound judgment depends upon effective data. We thank you who are accurately submitting your reports as requested.

With general Church participation in acquiring capital assets, it is incumbent that you manage prudently. We exhort you to seek participation only for equipment and other capital assets that are justifiably needed for successful production. The Lord's trust in these matters should never be violated.

The business reputation of the Church must be held impeccable. All accounts payable should be remitted as agreed. Very often nonprofit organizations expect discounts on their purchases and then they're dilatory in payment. Let it not be so with us. This applies to your promissory notes with the Church and your production commitments. These are sacred obligations and should be honored accordingly.

### Labor diligently

Now, brothers and sisters, so much remains to be done. May we follow the counsel and example of our leader, President Kimball. At the October welfare conference last year, he said: "May I urge you to go forward in this great work. So much depends upon our willingness to make up our minds collectively and individually, that present levels of performance are not accept-

able, either to ourselves or the Lord." (ENSIGN, Nov. 1977, p. 79.)

To all who diligently labor, the Lord gives this promise: "And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life" (D&C 51:19).

My brothers and sisters, the Lord loves you for your devotion and untiring efforts. May he bless you as you continue to meet the great challenges before us today and tomorrow, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The congregation sang the hymn, "Do What Is Right."

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## Bishop H. Burke Peterson

Brothers and sisters, this morning President Kimball has outlined for us standards of performance as they relate to the subject of personal and family preparedness. The filmstrip has refreshed our memories and hopefully inspired us to set goals and make preparations in areas of need.

Each of the principles discussed in the filmstrip is basic and should have direct application in the lives of every person and family member in the Church. Individual needs will vary as does the circumstance of each of us. Personal situations change as years go by. We should constantly appraise our needs and update our direction and emphasis. Our eternal progression, in large measure, is determined by our ability to evaluate and strengthen each area of weakness. What is the need of one may not necessarily be satisfied in the same way for another. For a moment, I would like to give a few examples of what I mean.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

To better help us understand and realize how to achieve these personal and family preparedness standards, the following film has been prepared. It is recommended that this film be shown during bishopric departmental sessions in the 1979 regional representative meetings. The film strip is being adapted and translated for use internationally. Following the filmstrip, Bishop H. Burke Peterson will suggest ways in which each family may apply these principles in their homes.

### Change with circumstances

As some of you may know, Sister Peterson and I have five daughters. Over the years, in an effort to increase our spiritual maturity, we have read the scriptures on a daily basis in our home. Fifteen years ago, when all of our children were at home, we would get together at 6:15 in the morning and study. Today, with one thirteen-year-old daughter at home, our scripture study continues, but the pattern has changed. In addition to reading together on family night and on Sunday evenings, we are now using an exciting new daily scripture reading program. On the side of the refrigerator is taped a chart with numbers from 1 to 30, each number representing consecutive days of reading the scriptures. Each family member is responsible for reading a chapter a day and recording his progress on the chart. It is visible to all. If one day is missed, then it is necessary for the one



who missed to begin again in the counting of consecutive reading days. Each is motivated by the fact that if we are successful as a family for a period of thirty days, there will be a special surprise in store for all. None of us wants to be the one to deny the others the prize. This approach is particularly motivating for a thirteen-year-old.

In the area of home production and storage, we still have the year's supply room in the basement with the sign designating it as the "Peterson Family Store." However, our garden and year's supply program is not the same as it was fifteen years ago. Our family store reflects the needs of two adults, one child, and many visitors instead of the needs of two adults and five children, as it did in years past.

Our physical health involvement has changed. In the past, when our children were younger and together, they were mutually involved in many physically stimulating exercises. It now becomes important for an older mother and father to become more a part of getting a thirteen-year-old involved in sports. For instance, in times past where daughters may have challenged each other, now a tennis match might be between the father on one side and mother and daughter on the other side. My jogging commitment has been a daily habit for fifteen years and is still a

part of life. However, each morning it becomes more difficult.

### **Family preparedness vital**

We find, as family conditions change and maturity develops, there is still a constant need for expressions of "I love you." There is still the need for regular father-mother-daughter interviews. There is still the need for dad and a thirteen-year-old to spend some time every summer at the amusement park. Husband-and-wife communication must still be nurtured. Needs like these will exist forever and must be satisfied.

My message, then, is this: We cannot progress without attending to our own personal and family preparedness on a regular basis. Preparedness is not something that is static; it is ever changing. I know of no situation in life where it is not necessary. May we all become involved in it for the blessing of our families. There is precious little time to waste in preparing for the eternities. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### **President N. Eldon Tanner**

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us. He will be followed by President Marion G. Romney.

## **Elder David B. Haight**

As we discuss the role of Church welfare services in the Lord's plan for his people, I should like to briefly draw our attention to a most important gospel principle. The Lord has emphasized in many ways the worth of souls: "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Man and woman have the possibility of a "continuation of the seeds forever and ever" and will never have an end (see

D&C 132:19). The elements comprising man's mortal body, man's intelligence, and man's spirit are indestructible and endless.

There are times when these precious and eternal souls need to be ministered to and assisted by the authority and power of the priesthood—times when they need to be lifted up and encouraged out of despair, whether of body, mind, or spirit. I remind you of

these eternal principles in a welfare meeting because this is the heart of our welfare services work—to lift, to sanctify, to bless so that individuals who have been helped can become more like God, whose sons and daughters they are.

### Great Depression

With this perspective in mind, let me give you some very sobering facts. In the early 1930s times were very difficult. Incomes dropped sharply; some incomes even ceased. Millions were out of work. The event which had caused such suffering was the Great Depression.

The United States' national income declined more than 50 percent. Farm income fell more than 50 percent. Unemployment rose to 25 percent of the labor force. Statistics, however, only hint at the real story of tragedy and suffering experienced by so many.

To illustrate the seriousness of the problem, in the Salt Lake Pioneer Stake during this depression period, more than half the stake was unemployed. The Southgate Ward of the Salt Lake Grant Stake, with 173 families, had 110 heads of families without work.

I lived through those hard years and saw firsthand what it was like. I had studied economics and business in college with the desire of becoming a banker. I completed my schooling shortly after the beginning of the depression and came to Salt Lake City, only to find that bankers were, as they then said, "ten cents a dozen." I found a job in a department store and was paid fifteen dollars per week and was fortunate to have a job. I learned the rewards of hard work.

I recall the day when all the banks closed and remember vividly walking up Main Street of this city and seeing crowds of people blocking the sidewalk and street in front of Zion's Bank. Anthony W. Ivins, counselor to President Grant, was standing on the steps of the

bank. He said to the people, "There's money here in the bank if you want it. There is no need to cause a run on the bank. There's money here for your deposits." And the people started to drift away because Brother Ivins was a symbol of integrity and confidence.

### Growth of welfare program

Later, in California, I was to watch the growth of the Church welfare program. I witnessed how the Church welfare plan successfully helped people to help themselves.

In 1936 the First Presidency explained that the purpose of the Church welfare plan was, in large measure, to counteract the effects of the depression. This plan was to establish a system, directed by the leaders of the Church, which would do away with idleness, abolish the dole, and foster industry, thrift, and self-respect among our people. The major objectives of this plan were to help people to help themselves and to re-enthroned work as the ruling principle in the lives of Church members. (See Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 3.)

Some undoubtedly questioned that such a visionary plan would ever succeed. After all, the Church then was relatively small and its resources limited. It depended entirely on voluntary efforts for money, leadership, and strength. Nevertheless, the intent and guiding principles were clear, and the promise was that faithful adherence to these principles would meet people's emergency and temporary needs.

### Government foibles

It is significant to note that about this same time, when the Lord established his way of caring for those in need, the "world," or government, introduced its form of dole assistance—a counterfeit alternative to the Lord's way. In most instances, the world's way dismissed the principle of individual work and family responsibility and

adopted the philosophy that "the government will take care of our needs" or "the government owes us a living." Individual and family initiative was supplanted by government handouts. The true spirit of love for our neighbor and concern for others as taught by the Savior had been generally ignored.

A brief look at statistics highlights how far government has taken us down the road toward bankruptcy while at the same time destroying the will and incentive to work and earn what is received by the sweat of our brow.

The total cost of government welfare assistance in the United States has risen from \$5.7 billion in 1945 to \$177 billion in 1975—a thirty-fold increase. (See "Reshuffling Income—Government's Growing Role," *U.S. News & World Report*, 4 Aug. 1975, pp. 32-33.)

What has this monstrous thing called government welfare done to the people? Today we have second- and third-generation welfare recipients. Millions have learned how to live off the government. Children are growing up without knowing the value and the dignity of work. The government has succeeded in doing what the Church welfare program seeks to prevent.

The Lord's way is different from government programs. The inspired Church welfare plan is administered on the principle that an individual is responsible to care for himself; where his resources are not adequate, family members are to assist. Where the family is unable to meet the needs of the individual, the Church stands ready to help. The Lord's way emphasizes individual work and responsibility and encourages people to help themselves.

The Church welfare services plan is being recognized more and more for its soundness and effectiveness. W. R. Poage, United States Representative from Texas, in speaking about the state of Utah's Work Experience and Training program, which is one of the few government programs requiring those

receiving assistance to work, "said Utah's strong work ethic, largely influenced by the philosophy of the Church has helped in establishing this program." He continued, "The government should help people help themselves." (*Deseret News*, 25 Aug. 1978, p. D-1; italics added.)

### No dole

But Church members are not immune to the perils of the government dole. There is evidence that some of our people are receiving something for nothing from the government. The fact that this condition exists in the Church highlights the need of our members to be knowledgeable about Church welfare principles. President Kimball has stated: "No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else" (*ENSIGN*, May 1978, p. 79).

Stake presidents, you preside over an important segment of the Church and are the spiritual leaders of your many members, who must be continually taught true gospel principles—not because they are popular, but because they are true. Anciently, Zion was portrayed as a very large tent which was held in place by cords fastened to stakes (see *Isa. 54:2*). Your stake is a distinctive entity, in which you and your priesthood leaders teach those divine principles.

You teach and encourage the bishops to find those in need and to assist them through the Lord's plan when help is needed. If your stake members understand the Lord's plan, they will be better prepared to govern themselves correctly.

### Welfare principles

Now, stake presidents, what specific steps can you take or reemphasize so that basic principles of welfare are practiced?

*First*, your personal understanding

and acceptance of these principles is vital. You are the president. Need we say more?

*Second*, Church welfare services is priesthood oriented and is accomplished through the bishops and quorum leaders, with a major responsibility placed on the elders quorum president, who may have 80 percent or more of the ward families in his quorum.

*Third*, you have a stake welfare services committee including yourself, your counselors, the high council, the chairman of the stake bishops' council, and the stake Relief Society presidency. In this meeting, the principles relating to welfare resources are identified and used by bishops to help those in temporary need. In this committee the establishment or addition of welfare services production projects is carefully analyzed and evaluated. Study is given to such resources as welfare commodity production, the calling of Church service specialists, and the training of bishops and high councilors who teach quorum presidents in personal and family preparedness. This stake welfare services committee meeting, more than any other, makes it possible for each stake president to give inspired leadership to welfare services.

*Fourth*, you have a stake bishops' council. Bishops must know about the poor, the needy, the distressed, and how to care for them. Bishops need to exchange ideas, evaluate the storehouse system, and identify work opportunities for those receiving assistance. Today, there is far more cash being issued by bishops than commodities as Church assistance. This was not the case in years past—this should not be the case today!

Stake presidents, these bishops report to you. You teach them, you motivate them, you hold personal interviews with each of them, you see that they learn and carry out their welfare services duties.

*Fifth*, you have meetings with the stake Melchizedek Priesthood committee. These meetings enable you to teach prevention and rehabilitation as-

pects of welfare services. Your high councilors assist you in teaching the Melchizedek Priesthood leaders personal and family preparedness, brotherly concern, and mutual help among quorum members. This type of concern is characterized in the scriptures as the pure love of Christ (see Moro. 7:47). It is a priesthood responsibility and is a hallmark of quorum welfare work.

*Sixth*, through the home teachers, information is given to quorum presidents and bishops, identifying those in need. Presidents, if you don't have a good home teaching program, you will never really know your members' needs. Bishops won't know who are the needy unless home teachers go as friends representing the bishop and quorum leaders to the home of each family and determine if all is well in that home. Are there any sick or in want? Are there family difficulties?

### Stake presidents' responsibility

Presidents of stakes, you must not be misled into believing that the Church can discharge its duties to the poor and the needy by shifting that responsibility to the government. You should use the Lord's welfare plan in caring for those in need. Forty years of experience have proven that this inspired welfare plan works. Hundreds of thousands of Latter-day Saints have been encouraged to help themselves through the use of these divine principles. So much depends upon our willingness to follow the Lord's counsel—counsel which not only the Spirit has borne to us is true but which history has proven to be right.

Stake presidents, you have the mantle of responsibility for teaching welfare service principles to your stakes, which means people helping people. Go home! Make it happen! Bless *all* the lives in your stake. I testify that the welfare services plan of the Church is divinely designed and revealed in these

latter days, to preserve the self-respect and dignity of man. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner

President Marion G. Romney will now speak to us.

## President Marion G. Romney

Brothers and sisters, I have enjoyed this meeting very much, and I pray the Lord will bless me while I say a few words about the subject I have been asked to treat, and that is caring for the poor as a covenantal obligation.

### A covenant obligation

A covenant, says Webster, is a contract, "a binding and solemn agreement made by two or more individuals... to do or keep from doing a specified thing."

As I began to consider whether caring for the poor is a covenantal obligation, I remembered a conference address I heard here in this building in 1936, given by Rulon S. Wells. That was forty-two and a half years ago. In that talk, Brother Wells explained that "between individuals we draw up an instrument and we sign it, and have it signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of witnesses, and then go before a notary public or a justice of the peace and make oath in order to make it binding, and in order that it may be still more so, laws are passed imposing penalties for breach of contract. These are in the nature of covenants which men make with their fellowmen." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1936, p. 41.)

With respect to Church covenants, he said:

"We should do the right, and if we do the Lord is bound, under the covenant that he has made with us. If we shall do all things whatsoever the Lord our God shall command us, there shall be glory added upon our heads forever and ever. That is the promise; it is God's covenant. We are a covenant

people, and that covenant has been restored to the earth with the restoration of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, and all things whatsoever the Lord our God shall command us are embodied in that glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Obedience, then, to the Gospel... will entitle us to eternal glory, worlds without end. That is the promise. The Lord keeps his covenants." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1936, pp. 40-41.)

In the 133rd section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord defined "the fulness of his gospel" as "his everlasting covenant" (D&C 133:57).

### Baptismal covenant

By accepting membership in the Church, through baptism and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, a person enters into a covenant with the Lord to obey and live by all the requirements of the gospel. The Lord's promise, conditioned upon such obedience, is the gift of eternal life.

"What must we then think," continued Brother Wells "of a covenant where God himself is the party of the first part? Such a covenant God has made with every one of us. He has entered into an agreement with us. If you will do all things which the Lord your God shall command you; if you will do his will, you shall have glory added upon your heads forever and ever. That is the pledge, and God keeps his covenant and we should do the same.

"How do we enter into that covenant? Not by signing a written instrument. True. But in a most im-

pressive manner and a most authoritative manner. The Lord commissions his servants, bestows upon them his priesthood and authorizes them to perform sacred ordinances, the same as if he had signed it in person. They call attention to the necessity of following the Lord Jesus Christ and obeying his Gospel, doing all things whatsoever the Lord shall command us. That is the contract, and we enter into it in a most solemn way. What is the formality of it, if not by writing with pen and ink? It is by baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. What a wonderful and impressive formality! Could anything be more so? In baptism by immersion we symbolize both death and life, for as the Apostle Paul explains: "We are buried with [Christ] by baptism into death" and brought forth out of the watery grave in likeness of his glorious resurrection." (In Conference Report, Apr. 1936, p. 41.)

This explanation of the significance of the baptismal covenant has remained vivid in my mind for all these forty years.

I have also been impressed by Alma's explanation of the baptismal covenant:

"Behold," said he to the assembled believers, "here are the waters of Mormon . . . and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

"Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

"Now I say unto you," continued Alma, "if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a *covenant* with him, that ye will

serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?"

"And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.

"And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.

"And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a *covenant* to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world." (Mosiah 18:8-13; italics added.)

### Care of the poor

In light of these revelations, it seems inevitable to me, as it did to Brother Wells, that every person who is baptized and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, which seals the ordinance, is under solemn covenant with the Lord to obey his commandments. With like certainty the scriptures make it clear that caring for the poor is one of those commandments.

Few, if any, of the Lord's instructions are stated more often, or given more emphasis in the scriptures than is the commandment that we members of his church take care of the poor.

In December 1830, the very year in which the Church was organized, he decreed that "the poor and the meek shall have the gospel preached unto them" (D&C 35:15).

And just a few days later, on January 2, 1831, he gave the Prophet Joseph the revelation recorded in the thirty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Cov-

enants, in which he dramatically illustrated our obligation to provide for the poor.

He says, "For your salvation,"—that's a pretty good reason—"For your salvation I give unto you a commandment. . . ."

"Wherefore, hear my voice and follow me. . . ."

(Now this was before the Church was a year old.)

"And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

"And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

"For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

"Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you [he's talking to the members of the Church], be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine. . . ."

"And now," he continued, "I give unto the church in these parts a commandment, that certain men among them shall be appointed, and they shall be appointed by the voice of the church;

"And they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer." (D&C 38:16, 22, 24-27, 34-35.)

Just a month and five days later the Lord said:

"If thou lovest me thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.

"And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support . . . with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

"And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me." (D&C 42:29-31.)

Before the month ended, he added in another revelation:

"Behold, I say unto you, that ye must visit the poor and the needy and administer to their relief" (D&C 44:6).

At the conference held in June of 1831, the Lord instructed the elders to "remember . . . the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

Later the same month he declared:

"Wo unto you rich men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and of judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!" (D&C 56:16.)

### Serious nature of covenants

I suppose I've said enough to establish the fact that caring for the poor is a covenantal obligation. It follows, then, that we look after our poor and distressed not only because it is convenient, or exciting, or socially acceptable; we should do it first and foremost in fulfillment of our covenant with the Lord that we will do so.

The seriousness with which the Lord considers the covenants he enters into with us is illustrated in what he said about the priesthood covenant:

"He that receiveth me," said Jesus, "receiveth my Father;

"And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.

"And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.

"Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

"But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." (D&C 84:37-41.)

A few illustrations of the con-

sequences of failing to perform according to our covenants should stimulate us to review our own performance, increase our fast offerings, and be more faithful in our welfare work.

### Providing for the poor

Speaking directly to the subject of our providing for the poor, the Lord said in April of 1834, just four years after the Church was organized:

"I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (D&C 104:14-18.)

This incisive statement is in harmony with the following prediction Jesus gave concerning the final judgment, as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew:

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

"And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

"Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

"I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

"Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

"Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:31-46.)

In conclusion, brothers and sisters, it seems to me that the scriptures clearly establish the fact that caring for the poor is a covenantal obligation.

That each of us will fully discharge our obligation under that covenant, I humbly pray, and leave my blessing with you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



### President N. Eldon Tanner

President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has been our concluding speaker.

The First General Session of the 148th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church will convene in the Tabernacle at ten o'clock this morning.

We will now sing, "High On The Mountain Top."

Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The congregation sang, "High On The Mountain Top."

Elder Hugh W. Pinnock pronounced the benediction.

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## SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard, and originating with station KSL, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, October 1, 1978, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada and through other facilities to several points overseas:

**Announcer:** Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the Crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, Robert Cundick, Tabernacle Organist, and the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

**Announcer:** All of the music for today's broadcast comes from Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio, "Saint Paul."

The Apostle Paul was a well-educated Roman whose missionary work and powerful teaching ability became legendary following his dramatic conversion to Christianity along the road to Damascus.

His famous epistles or letters fill almost one third of the New Testament, but as we contemplate his words from almost two thousand years ago, we see that Paul's struggles, difficulties, and concerns were not much different from our own. Paul's poignant admonitions telescope history, and in his writings we find meaningful insight for our own lives.

(Choir: "Lord, Thou Alone Art God")—Mendelssohn

**Announcer:** The Apostle Paul knew firsthand about the value of endurance. He had a physical handicap, and although he was able to use the power of his calling to heal the sick and to bring the dead to life, Paul, himself was never made well. We don't know what his physical handicap was, exactly, but he often referred to it as the thorn in his side. It interfered with his work, and apparently he lived with the hope that the Lord might make him well. Instead, he was required to bear his physical burden and to overcome its effects on him.

For Paul, this burden was to become a lesson in endurance and perseverance . . . evidence that trials are opportunities for growth . . . proof that we can endure obstacles with

dignity and achieve greatness in spite of them.

Paul learned so he could teach us that God gives us trials for our own growth and good. Thus, he wrote: "Happy and blessed are they who have endured, for . . . the soul shall live forever."<sup>1</sup>

(Choir: "To Thee, O Lord")—Mendelssohn

(Choir: without announcement "Happy and Blest Are They")—Mendelssohn

**Announcer:** Paul the Apostle was one who did rise up and shine. The glory of the Lord was truly upon him. And yet, he remained a human being, with all of the frailties each of us experience. He, too, struggled to overcome self, and he was troubled greatly by the personal weaknesses he could not conquer. He, too, experienced psychological burdens, believing he was the least of Christ's apostles. He could never erase the memory that, before his conversion, he fought against God and persecuted the Church.

And so through Paul, we learn another vital lesson: There is no such thing as instant perfection. It is not an overnight process. We must not become discouraged by comparing our own progress to the spiritual heights attained by others, for we know not what personal struggles they may yet be asked to endure.

Paul was eventually condemned to death by the Roman court, but before his execution, he had already found the tranquility that comes through obedience. He tells us that to be "spiritually minded is life and peace," that we must "cleave to that which is good" and "if possible . . . live peaceably with all men."

(Choir: "Rise! Up! Arise!")—Mendelssohn

(Choir: without announcement "O Great Is the Depth")—Mendelssohn

**Announcer:** Again we leave you within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

**Announcer:** This concludes the two thousand five hundred sixty-third performance continuing the 50th year of this traditional broadcast from the Tabernacle on Temple Square brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Robert Cundick was at the Organ, the Spoken Word by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the Crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

## SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the Conference, with Jerold D. Ottley and Donald H. Ripplinger conducting.

The Mormon Youth Chorus under the direction of Brother Robert C.

Bowden sang at the Saturday afternoon session.

The General Priesthood Meeting held Saturday evening featured a combined Choir of male voices from the Mormon Youth Chorus and the Tabernacle Choir, directed by Jerold Ottley and Robert C. Bowden.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music, and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the Conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley and John Longhurst, Tabernacle Organists.

**FRANCIS M. GIBBONS**

**Clerk of the Conference**



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